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THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

EDINBURGH EDITION

THE WORKS OF

THOMAS CARLYLE

IN THIRTY VOLUMES

VOL. II

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

I

Originally published 1837

THOMAS CARLYLE

THE
FRENCH REVOLUTION
A HISTORY

> Μέγας ὁ ἀγὼν ἔστι, θεῖον γὰρ ἔργον· ὑπὲρ βασιλείας, ὑπὲρ ἐλευθερίας, ὑπὲρ εὐροίας, ὑπὲρ ἀταραξίας.
>
> ARRIANUS
>
> Δόγμα γὰρ αὐτῶν τίς μεταβάλλει; χωρὶς δὲ δογμάτων μεταβολῆς, τί ἄλλο ἢ δουλεία στενόντων καὶ πείθεσθαι προσποιουμένων;
>
> ANTONINUS

IN THREE VOLUMES

I

THE BASTILLE

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
153-157 FIFTH AVENUE
1903

Dieſem Ambos vergleich' ich das Land, den Hammer dem Herrſcher,
  Und dem Volke das Blech, das in der Mitte ſich krümmt,
Wehe dem armen Blech, wenn nur willkürliche Schläge
  Ungewiß treffen, und nie fertig der Keſſel erſcheint!

Goethe.

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INTRODUCTION

Everybody knows what befell the original manuscript of *The French Revolution*: a fate unexampled in the history of the world's great literature. It is true that in the case of one great but non-literary production of the human intellect it had a parallel which, though not exact, is close enough to entitle Newton's dog Diamond to share a sinister immortality with the nameless housemaid of Mr. John Stuart Mill. But the disaster which the illustrious astronomer bore with such heroic patience, must, after all, have seemed less irreparable to him even at the moment of its accidence, than his own calamity may well have appeared to Carlyle. To have the ms. of a mathematical process destroyed is, after all, but to lose something which you can send the trustiest of retrievers to hunt for, and that, too, along a road every step of which is familiar to him. Sir Isaac could, and probably did, despatch faithful Reason to recover for him his lost calculations; Carlyle had to depend mainly upon treacherous Memory or capricious Imagination for the reconstruction of his destroyed History. That, after a brief interval of stunned despair, he braced himself to the heart-breaking task, and without complaint accomplished it—generously, the while, concealing from his friend how terribly he felt the blow—was a feat of noble fortitude which may well atone for many an outburst of querulous impatience under minor ills.

It seems a feat, too, the more remarkable, because, of all historians, Carlyle, one must think, would be likely to suffer most from such a hideous mishap. No man's completed work is likely to have differed more widely from its rough notes than that of this splendid Impressionist, whose laboriously accumulated materials will, to any one who through his references traces them to their sources, seem little else than the mere massed colours on a painter's palette. Every portrait, every incident, every scene and situation in the lurid drama has the air of having been dashed off 'at a heat' from a hand of marvellous swiftness, directed not only by an imagination on fire, but by a soul with every emotion responsive, and an intellect with every faculty alert. If *Sartor Resartus* shows Carlyle at his greatest in dealing with the deeper things of the individual consciousness, it is in *The French Revolution* that his outlook on the world of his fellow-men is the widest, and his mastery of the mighty and everlasting drama of their actions and passions the most assured. It is here, too, beyond doubt, that he displays more impressively than in any other of his writings, the astonishing wealth and variety of his powers. The book, to begin with, is a monument—second only in importance, if second, to his *Frederick*—of his untiring industry in the collection of his materials, and his unerring artistic instinct for their effective use. To the first of these qualities those only can do partial justice who have explored for themselves some small portion of that vast mass of authorities—good, bad, and indifferent, romantic and prosaic, Royalist, Republican, and neutral—among which Carlyle seems not to have left the obscurest document, or shred of a document, unexamined. Times out of number it must have happened to the student wading through one or other of the scores of volumes which make up the *Histoire Parlementaire* to light on some vivid touch of character, some momentary flash of picturesque description, some casual phrases of dramatic narrative, and to have turned straightway to *The French Revolution* in the full assurance, seldom if ever disappointed, that the touch, the flash, the phrase, has not escaped the master's eye. It may be the only memorable, the only notable or quotable thing in the writer under examination, the one gleam of light or breath of life in a dull and inanimate chronicle of events; but there, sure enough, it is, rescued for ever from the heaped-up rubbish of its surrounding pages, and the long, long labour of their wearisome overhauling represented often as not, perhaps, by a single illuminating line.

What, moreover, is a still stronger proof of exhaustive research, it is not only upon these touches of the dramatic and the picturesque that Carlyle's unescapable artistic eye has seized, but in cases where the total effect of a long and uninspired *memoire pour servir* is, on the whole, informing, though no single passage of it be worthy of literal citation, we here too find evidence not to be mistaken that Carlyle has been carefully over the ground. If the fashion of a later time had prevailed in the Thirties, and historians had been in the habit of prefacing the text of their works with a marshalled list of all the authorities whom they had consulted, the introductory pages of this volume would have not only exhibited a long string of names (scores of them now concealed in the footnotes under the modest reference '*Hist. Parl.*'), but would have shown incidentally how nothing was too heavy, or too light, for Carlyle's consultation, no cranny of his subject too minute, no corner too remote, for his indefatigable investigations.

Industry of this description and degree is, of course, no unfamiliar virtue in these days. Every student who publishes a 'monograph' on some infinitesimal fraction of his narrowly circumscribed 'period,' possesses it nowadays, in more or less ample measure. Exhaustive treatment is indeed his only excuse for the excessive limitation of its scope; to 'scamp' the work in so small a canvas would indeed be unpardonable. But the trouble with the contemporary student is that, though he leaves no single document of all Dryasdust's voluminous collection untouched, he is a little too apt to use them in the spirit of Dryasdust himself. No one since Carlyle—as no one assuredly, save Gibbon, before him—has in equal measure combined industry in the study of authorities, accuracy in their citation, and fairness in their use, with anything approaching to Carlyle's artistic faculty and literary power. For the requirement of the third of the above-mentioned qualities will as effectually exclude one of the two famous historians, his contemporaries, as insistence on the second would disqualify the other. Macaulay was as industrious and as accurate a student as he was a brilliant writer, but what about his fairness? Froude collected his materials laboriously, and intended to use them fairly; but he was, without excessive exaggeration, credited with 'a constitutional inability to quote even the shortest and simplest document correctly.' And in sheer power of 'visualising' scenes and persons, the describer of the Fall of the Bastille, and the Insurrection of Women, the delineator of Mirabeau and Marat surpasses them both.

The French Revolution: A History. That is Carlyle's own name for his work, the name which he gives it on its title-page. *The French Revolution: A Drama,* would, some think, be a truer description of it, and one which, while accounting for its powerful impression on a reader, would at the same time indicate, and in a manner justify its limitations. For it is the privilege of the drama to present its own 'motive' from the outset, to postulate the past life and present disposition of each one of its personages, and to set in motion, as though from a previous state of inertia, those forces of human action, conditioned by external circumstance, which must inexorably determine the evolution of its plot. We do not—or we should not—'go behind' the argument of the drama, or seek for causes of those causes which the dramatist asks us to assume as operating. These being given, it is enough for him if we are unable to detect any incredibility in their represented action—enough for him if the persons of the drama behave in accordance with the characters assigned to them, and if event beget event according to a law of sequence which we recognise as inevitable. To have accomplished this is for the dramatist to have achieved complete success on the constructive side of his art: we have neither the right nor the desire to ask more of him. And it is thus, *mutatis mutandis,* that we must read Carlyle's *French Revolution.* It is true, of course, that since it is a historical and not an imaginative work, we have a right to insist that its data and motive must conform to the facts of history, or to a reasonable conception of those facts; but this condition it fully satisfies. 'Given' (we may suppose its author saying), 'a political system rotten to the core, and a social organism so dangerously diseased and weakened in one or more of its vital parts as to be powerless to resist the malady of its institutions; given a bankrupt treasury, a corrupt fisc, a system of taxation cruel in its burdens and shamefully unequal in its incidence, a starving peasantry, a non-resident noblesse, an army officered by rigidly exclusive privilege, and a middle-class honeycombed with discontent—given such things and such men, and you have the plot of a tragedy which must necessarily, and which did in fact, evolve itself thus and thus.' Agree to start from these data, which, as every student of the period will acknowledge are in substantial accord with the state of things existing at the date of Louis xv.'s death, and you will not be able to deny to *The French Revolution* the merit of strict historic accuracy in addition to its more generally recognised claims as a work of unrivalled dramatic force. You will have, in short, to admit that the drama which Carlyle calls 'a history' does within these limits deserve the title he gave it, and that, if we consent to look no further back than 1774, and no further forward than 1793, the drama is in fact a history in the fullest sense of the word.

It is only when one 'goes behind the argument' of the monstrous tragi-comedy—only when one turns to Carlyle for that sort of *recherche sur les causes* which has become so dear to the historian of a later day—that one begins to find inadequacy. Not that even here it is inadequacy of the kind which is due to defective handiwork. Dangerous indeed would it be to impute to so sternly conscientious an inquirer that he had insufficiently investigated the more remote historic causes of the great upheaval. For aught I know, he may have studied the last hundred years of the *ancien régime*—or, say, the political and social condition of France from Richelieu onward—as industriously as he shows himself to have studied the twenty years immediately preceding its fall; but if so, his habit of the preacher and the moralist was too strong for his instinct of the historian. He is too ready to lay all the sins and sufferings of the Revolution at that particular door at which he wishes to knock, too anxious to bring home its guilt and misery to those particular sinners whom he conceived it to be his main mission to indict. He cannot bring himself to assign their due weight to those already predetermined causes which are not directly traceable to individual wrongdoing. How many and how potent these causes were, and how defective are all those theories of the great catastrophe which seek to explain it solely by the action of human selfishness, frivolity, and falsehood in high places, has often been pointed out since Carlyle's time, and has been demonstrated once for all in the masterly study of M. Taine. Carlyle's inquiries yielded him a much simpler result. 'Nay, answer the courtiers,' he says, describing (Book II. Chapter viii.) their superficial explanation of the 'general overturn,'

> 'it was Turgot, it was Necker with their mad innovating; it was the Queen's want of etiquette; it was he, it was she, it was that. Friends! it was every scoundrel that had lived and quack-like pretended to be doing, and been only eating and *mis*doing in all provinces of life, as Shoeblack and Sovereign Lord, each in his degree from the time of Charlemagne and earlier. All this (for be sure no falsehood perishes but is as seed sown out to grow) has been storing itself for thousands of years, and now the account day has come. And rude will the settlement be: of wrath laid up against the day of wrath.'

This, no doubt, is a more satisfying theory than that of the courtiers; but is it adequate? Are the conscienceless misdoings of men a more potent factor in the calamities of nations than their conscientious errors? Did the selfish sloth and profligacy of Louis XV. do more harm to France by hastening the advent of the Revolution, than the narrow and cruel, but perfectly honest, laborious, and disinterested fanaticism of Robespierre in driving it by the bloody ways of the Terror to the Napoleonic reaction, and in thereby arresting the political development of the nation for nearly a hundred years? It is a question not easily to be answered. It is easier to see that both conscienceless misdoers and conscientious blunderers may often count for little in the sum of causes as compared with those great secular forces—social, economical, industrial—which have operated through successive ages to the shaping of the political material, intractable it may be, or even ultimately and inevitably explosive, with which the ruler for the time being is, with or without a conscience, compelled to deal.

But even if we are to consider men alone, and to leave their surroundings out of account, it seems as perverse as it is depressing to hold, that the service rendered to a state by the faithful discharge of civic duty should compare so unfavourably in amount of enduring effect with the disservice done them by selfish neglect of civic obligation. From Sully to Richelieu, and from Richelieu to Turgot and Necker, France had never wanted able servants whose whole lives were dedicated by ambition or patriotism to the public good; and to believe that all the efforts of these devoted, highly-placed, and powerful men were defeated not by their own misdirection or by the inherent difficulties of the work, but by the sheer prepotence for evil of certain obscure *fainéants* and impostors among their contemporaries, is enough to make one despair of the future of mankind.

Surely, too, apart from all questions of the potency of their individual influence, the Quacks and Charlatans, the men 'who had pretended to be doing, and been only eating and *mis*doing,' come in for a far larger share of Carlyle's denunciations than their numerical importance warrants. It has been observed, ere this, that in spite of the denunciations aforesaid, the whole Carlylean gallery of lifelike revolutionary portraits contains hardly any (and absolutely no considerable) figure which can fairly be described as that of a 'Quack.' Cynics there are in plenty, like Talleyrand and the Abbé Maury, and 'Goose Gobel,' men whose frank avowal of disbelief sets them at the opposite pole to the hypocrite, of whose very essence it is to feign faith in principles or institutions in the sanctity or stability of which he has ceased to believe. But for the rest, for the other representatives of that Church, that monarchy, that social order, which Carlyle declares to have degenerated into a 'sham,' the nobler part of them manfully enough upheld their cause and laboured for it, fought for it, died for it, without apparently the faintest suspicion that a sham it was; while as for the baser sort among them, surely the unfrocked priest who 'rallied' or 'ratted' to the Revolution wrote himself down, not charlatan, but rather timeserver, and the recreant noble who tried to save his skin by deserting his order did so not because he was a Quack but because he was a Sneak.

Carlyle, however, like many another preacher of his nationality, was far more charitable than his preachments. That is to say, he comes into far closer contact with the realities of life, and, in judging men's actions, approaches much nearer to that standard of the all-comprehending which is the all-forgiving when he descends from the pulpit. Once he has descended, the rich humanity of the man and his Shakespearean breadth of sympathy assert themselves; he forgets his Radical or Tory-Radical crotchets, his Puritan prejudices; and the partisans of either cause, the lofty and the base alike, take life upon his pages, portrayed for us not only with a touch of magic but with a just and equal hand. Once in the swing of his narrative, and his moralisings for the time abandoned, Carlyle does not find Quackery or look for it. He writes, as has been said, with all his quick sensibilities responsive to the subtlest impressions, and all his wonderful array of intellectual faculties on the alert. The shadows, of necessity, fall thick and heavy over his sombre subject; but every ray that is shed upon it from any quarter is caught instantaneously on the mirror of his artistic genius, and flashed back upon us with redoubled brilliancy from the broken facets of his style. Bravery, beauty, dignity, devotion—the noble, the tragic, the pathetic, the grotesque,—these things never appeal to him in vain. The charm, the courage, and the fate alike of Marie Antoinette and of Charlotte Corday, attract him irresistibly, and make him almost forget that the one was only a lovely mischief-maker and the other only a beautiful assassin. Wherever there is heroism, fidelity to duty, calmness in the face of death, it inspires him; he has sung the dirge of the Girondins as movingly as the requiem of the Swiss. But all aspects, all moods of the great Revolution are reflected in his pages. The pity of it, the terror of it, is always with us, and the mad folly of it is never far off. From the Fall of the Bastille to the Capture of the Tuileries, to the September Massacres, to the deaths of Louis and Marie Antoinette; to Madame Momoro as the Goddess of Reason, to Anacharsis Clootz appearing before the Convention 'with the Human Species at his heels,' and thence to the wild confusion, the breathless struggle of Thermidor, and Robespierre's hideous end—through what scenes of horror and of heroism, through what moods of ruth, and wrath, and scornful laughter have many of us passed in those days when the wonderful History was in the early splendour of its fame, and we ourselves in the first freshness of our enthusiasm! And for how many more of us has it given to that terrible drama in the life of a foreign people as vivid and imperishable a reality as any passage of our own history that has received the breath of life from Shakespeare or from Scott!

H. D. TRAILL.

THE BASTILLE

BOOK FIRST

DEATH OF LOUIS XV

CHAPTER I

LOUIS THE WELL-BELOVED

PRESIDENT HÉNAULT, remarking on royal Surnames of Honour how difficult it often is to ascertain not only why, but even when, they were conferred, takes occasion, in his sleek official way, to make a philosophical reflection. 'The Surname of *Bien-aimé* (Well-beloved),' says he, 'which Louis xv. bears, will not leave posterity in the same doubt. This Prince, in the year 1744, while hastening from one end of his kingdom to the other, and suspending his conquests in Flanders that he might fly to the assistance of Alsace, was arrested at Metz by a malady which threatened to cut short his days. At the news of this, Paris, all in terror, seemed a city taken by storm: the churches resounded with supplications and groans; the prayers of priests and people were every moment interrupted by their sobs: and it was from an interest so dear and tender that this Surname of *Bien-aimé* fashioned itself,—a title higher still than all the rest which this great Prince has earned.'[1]

So stands it written; in lasting memorial of that year

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[1] *Abrégé Chronologique de l'Histoire de France* (Paris, 1775), p. 701.

1744. Thirty other years have come and gone; and 'this great Prince' again lies sick; but in how altered circumstances now! Churches resound not with excessive groanings; Paris is stoically calm: sobs interrupt no prayers, for indeed none are offered; except Priests' Litanies, read or chanted at fixed money-rate per hour, which are not liable to interruption. The shepherd of the people has been carried home from Little Trianon, heavy of heart, and been put to bed in his own Château of Versailles: the flock knows it, and heeds it not. At most, in the immeasurable tide of French Speech (which ceases not day after day, and only ebbs towards the short hours of night), may this of the royal sickness emerge from time to time as an article of news. Bets are doubtless depending; nay, some people 'express themselves loudly in the streets.'[1] But for the rest, on green field and steepled city, the May sun shines out, the May evening fades; and men ply their useful or useless business as if no Louis lay in danger.

Dame Dubarry, indeed, might pray, if she had a talent for it; Duke d'Aiguillon too, Maupeou and the Parlement Maupeou: these, as they sit in their high places, with France harnessed under their feet, know well on what basis they continue there. Look to it, D'Aiguillon; sharply as thou didst, from the Mill of St. Cast, on Quiberon and the invading English; thou, 'covered if not with glory yet with meal!' Fortune was ever accounted inconstant: and each dog has but his day.

Forlorn enough languished Duke d'Aiguillon, some years ago; covered, as we said, with meal; nay with worse. For La Chalotais, the Breton Parlementeer, accused him not only of poltroonery and tyranny, but even of *concussion* (official plunder of money); which accusations it was easier to get 'quashed' by backstairs Influences than to get answered: neither could the thoughts, or even the tongues, of men be tied. Thus, under disastrous eclipse, had this grand-nephew

[1] *Mémoires de M. le Baron Besenval* (Paris, 1805), ii. 59-90.

of the great Richelieu to glide about; unworshipped by the world; resolute Choiseul, the abrupt proud man, disdaining him, or even forgetting him. Little prospect but to glide into Gascony, to rebuild Châteaus there,[1] and die inglorious killing game! However, in the year 1770, a certain young soldier, Dumouriez by name, returning from Corsica, could see 'with sorrow, at Compiègne, the old King of France, on foot, with doffed hat, in sight of his army, at the side of a magnificent phaeton, doing homage to the—Dubarry.'[2]

Much lay therein! Thereby, for one thing, could D'Aiguillon postpone the rebuilding of his Château, and rebuild his fortunes first. For stout Choiseul would discern in the Dubarry nothing but a wonderfully dizened Scarlet-woman; and go on his way as if she were not. Intolerable: the source of sighs, tears, of pettings and poutings; which would not end till 'France' (La France, as she named her royal valet) finally mustered heart to see Choiseul; and with that 'quivering in the chin (*tremblement du menton*)' natural in such case,[3] faltered out a dismissal: dismissal of his last substantial man, but pacification of his scarlet-woman. Thus D'Aiguillon rose again, and culminated. And with him there rose Maupeou, the banisher of Parlements; who plants you a refractory President 'at Croe in Combrailles on the top of steep rocks, inaccessible except by litters,' there to consider himself. Likewise there rose Abbé Terray, dissolute Financier, paying eightpence in the shilling,—so that wits exclaim in some press at the playhouse, 'Where is Abbé Terray, that he might reduce us to two-thirds!' And so have these individuals (verily by black-art) built them a Domdaniel, or enchanted Dubarrydom; call it an Armida-Palace, where they dwell pleasantly; Chancellor Maupeou 'playing blind-man's-buff' with the scarlet Enchantress; or gallantly presenting her with dwarf Negroes;

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[1] Arthur Young, *Travels during the years* 1787-88-89 (Bury St. Edmunds, 1792), i. 44.

[2] *La Vie et les Mémoires du Général Dumouriez* (Paris, 1822), i. 141.

[3] Besenval, *Mémoires*, ii. 21.

—and a Most Christian King has unspeakable peace within doors, whatever he may have without. 'My Chancellor is a scoundrel; but I cannot do without him.'[1]

Beautiful Armida-Palace, where the inmates live enchanted lives; lapped in soft music of adulation; waited on by the splendours of the world;—which nevertheless hangs wondrously as by a single hair. Should the Most Christian King die; or even get seriously afraid of dying! For, alas, had not the fair haughty Chateauroux to fly, with wet cheeks and flaming heart, from that Fever-scene at Metz, long since; driven forth by sour shavelings? She hardly returned, when fever and shavelings were both swept into the background. Pompadour too, when Damiens wounded Royalty 'slightly, under the fifth rib,' and our drive to Trianon went off futile, in shrieks and madly shaken torches,—had to pack, and be in readiness: yet did not go, the wound not proving poisoned. For his Majesty has religious faith; believes, at least in a Devil. And now a third peril; and who knows what may be in it! For the Doctors look grave; ask privily, If his Majesty had not the small-pox long ago?—and doubt it may have been a false kind. Yes, Maupeou, pucker those sinister brows of thine, and peer out on it with thy malign rat-eyes: it is a questionable case. Sure only that man is mortal; that with the life of one mortal snaps irrevocably the wonderfulest talisman, and all Dubarrydom rushes off, with tumult, into infinite Space; and ye, as subterranean Apparitions are wont, vanish utterly,—leaving only a smell of sulphur!

These, and what holds of these, may pray,—to Beelzebub, or whoever will hear them. But from the rest of France there comes, as was said, no prayer; or one of an *opposite* character, 'expressed openly in the streets.' Château or Hôtel, where an enlightened Philosophism scrutinises many things, is not given to prayer: neither are Rossbach victories, Terray Finances, nor, say only 'sixty thousand *Lettres de Cachet*'

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[1] Dulaure, *Histoire de Paris* (Paris, 1824), vii. 328.

(which is Maupeou's share), persuasives towards that. O Hénault! Prayers? From a France smitten (by black-art) with plague after plague, and lying now, in shame and pain, with a Harlot's foot on its neck, what prayer can come? Those lank scarecrows, that prowl hunger-stricken through all highways and byways of French Existence, will they pray? The dull millions that, in the workshop or furrowfield, grind foredone at the wheel of Labour, like haltered gin-horses, if blind so much the quieter? Or they that in the Bicêtre Hospital, 'eight to a bed,' lie waiting their manumission? Dim are those heads of theirs, dull stagnant those hearts to them the great Sovereign is known mainly as the great Regrater of Bread. If they hear of his sickness, they will answer with a dull *Tant pis pour lui*; or with the question, Will he die?

Yes, will he die? that is now, for all France, the grand question, and hope; whereby alone the King's sickness has still some interest.

CHAPTER II

REALISED IDEALS

Such a changed France have we; and a changed Louis. Changed, truly; and further than thou yet seest!—To the eye of History many things, in that sick-room of Louis, are now visible, which to the Courtiers there present were invisible. For indeed it is well said, 'in every object there is inexhaustible meaning; the eye sees in it what the eye brings means of seeing.' To Newton and to Newton's Dog Diamond, what a different pair of Universes; while the painting on the optical retina of both was, most likely, the same! Let the Reader here, in this sick-room of Louis, endeavour to look with the mind too.

Time was when men could (so to speak) of a given man, by nourishing and decorating him with fit appliances, to the due pitch, *make* themselves a King, almost as the Bees do; and what was still more to the purpose, loyally obey him when made. The man so nourished and decorated, thenceforth named royal, does verily bear rule; and is said, and even thought, to be, for example, 'prosecuting conquests in Flanders,' when he lets himself like luggage be carried thither: and no light luggage; covering miles of road. For he has his unblushing Chateauroux, with her bandboxes and rouge-pots, at his side; so that, at every new station, a wooden gallery must be run up between their lodgings. He has not only his *Maison-Bouche*, and *Valetaille* without end, but his very Troop of Players, with their pasteboard coulisses, thunder-barrels, their kettles, fiddles, stage-wardrobes, portable larders (and chaffering and quarrelling enough); all mounted in wagons, tumbrils, second-hand chaises,—sufficient not to conquer Flanders, but the patience of the world. With such a flood of loud jingling appurtenances does he lumber along prosecuting his conquests in Flanders: wonderful to behold. So nevertheless it was and had been: to some solitary thinker it might seem strange; but even to him inevitable, not unnatural.

For ours is a most fictile world; and man is the most fingent plastic of creatures. A world not fixable; not fathomable! An unfathomable Somewhat, which is *Not we*; which we can work with, and live amidst,—and model, miraculously in our miraculous Being, and name World.—But if the very Rocks and Rivers (as Metaphysic teaches) are, in strict language, *made* by those outward Senses of ours, how much more, by the Inward Sense, are all Phenomena of the spiritual kind: Dignities, Authorities, Holies, Unholies! Which inward Sense, moreover, is not permanent like the outward ones, but for ever growing and changing. Does not the Black African take of Sticks and Old Clothes (say, exported Monmouth-Street cast-clothes) what will suffice, and of these, cunningly combining them, fabricate for himself an Eidolon (Idol, or *Thing Seen*), and name it *Mumbo-Jumbo*; which he can thenceforth pray to, with upturned awestruck eye, not without hope? The white European mocks; but ought rather to consider; and see whether he, at home, could not do the like a little more wisely.

So it *was*, we say, in those conquests of Flanders, thirty years ago: but so it no longer is. Alas, much more lies sick than poor Louis: not the French King only, but the French Kingship; this too, after long rough tear and wear, is breaking down. The world is all so changed; so much that seemed vigorous has sunk decrepit, so much that was not is beginning to be!—Borne over the Atlantic, to the closing ear of Louis, King by the Grace of God, what sounds are these; muffled ominous, new in our centuries? Boston Harbour is black with unexpected Tea: behold a Pennsylvanian Congress gather; and ere long, on Bunker Hill, DEMOCRACY announcing, in rifle-volleys death-winged, under her Star Banner, to the tune of Yankee-doodle-doo, that she is born, and, whirlwind-like, will envelope the whole world!

Sovereigns die and Sovereignties: how all dies, and is for a Time only; is a 'Time-phantasm, yet reckons itself real!' The Merovingian Kings, slowly wending on their bullock-carts through the streets of Paris, with their long hair flowing, have all wended slowly on,—into Eternity. Charlemagne sleeps at Salzburg, with truncheon grounded; only Fable expecting that he will awaken. Charles the Hammer, Pepin Bow-legged, where now is their eye of menace, their voice of command? Rollo and his shaggy Northmen cover not the Seine with ships; but have sailed off on a longer voyage. The hair of Towhead (*Tête d'étoupes*) now needs no combing; Iron-cutter (*Taillefer*) cannot cut a cobweb; shrill Fredegonda, shrill Brunhilda have had out their hot life-scold, and lie silent, their hot life-frenzy cooled. Neither from that black Tower de Nesle descends now darkling the doomed gallant, in his sack, to the Seine waters; plunging into Night: for Dame de Nesle now cares not for this world's gallantry, heeds not this world's scandal; Dame de Nesle is herself gone into Night. They are all gone; sunk,

—down, down, with the tumult they made; and the rolling and the trampling of ever new generations passes over them; and they hear it not any more for ever.

And yet withal has there not been realised somewhat? Consider (to go no further) these strong Stone-edifices, and what they hold! Mud-Town of the Borderers (*Lutetia Parisiorum* or *Barisiorum*) has paved itself, has spread over all the Seine Islands, and far and wide on each bank, and become City of Paris, sometimes boasting to be 'Athens of Europe,' and even 'Capital of the Universe.' Stone towers frown aloft; long-lasting, grim with a thousand years. Cathedrals are there, and a Creed (or memory of a Creed) in them; Palaces, and a State and Law. Thou seest the Smoke-vapour; *un*extinguished Breath as of a thing living. Labour's thousand hammers ring on her anvils: also a more miraculous Labour works noiselessly, not with the Hand but with the Thought. How have cunning workmen in all crafts, with their cunning head and right-hand, tamed the Four Elements to be their ministers; yoking the Winds to their Sea-chariot, making the very Stars their Nautical Timepiece;—and written and collected a *Bibliothèque du Roi*; among whose Books is the Hebrew Book! A wondrous race of creatures: *these* have been realised, and what of Skill is in these: call not the Past Time, with all its confused wretchednesses, a lost one.

Observe, however, that of man's whole terrestrial possessions and attainments, unspeakably the noblest are his Symbols, divine or divine-seeming; under which he marches and fights, with victorious assurance, in this life-battle: what we can call his Realised Ideals. Of which realised Ideals, omitting the rest, consider only these two: his Church, or spiritual Guidance, his Kingship, or temporal one. The Church: what a word was there; richer than Golconda and the treasures of the world! In the heart of the remotest mountains rises the little Kirk; the Dead all slumbering round it, under their white memorial-stones, 'in hope of a happy resurrection':—dull wert thou, O Reader, if never in any hour (say of moaning midnight, when such Kirk hung spectral in the sky, and Being was as if swallowed up of Darkness) it spoke to thee—things unspeakable, that went into thy soul's soul. Strong was he that had a Church, what we can call a Church: he stood thereby, though 'in the centre of Immensities, in the conflux of Eternities,' yet manlike towards God and man; the vague shoreless Universe had become for him a firm city, and dwelling which he knew. Such virtue was in Belief; in these words, well spoken: *I believe.* Well might men prize their *Credo*, and raise stateliest Temples for it, and reverend Hierarchies, and give it the tithe of their substance; it was worth living for and dying for.

Neither was that an inconsiderable moment when wild armed men first raised their Strongest aloft on the buckler-throne, and, with clanging armour and hearts, said solemnly: Be thou our Acknowledged Strongest! In such Acknowledged Strongest (well named King, *Kön-ning*, Can-ning, or Man that was Able) what a Symbol shone now for them,—significant with the destinies of the world! A Symbol of true Guidance in return for loving Obedience; properly, if he knew it, the prime want of man. A Symbol which might be called sacred; for is there not, in reverence for what is better than we, an indestructible sacredness? On which ground, too, it was well said there lay in the Acknowledged Strongest a divine right; as surely there might in the Strongest, whether Acknowledged or not,—considering *who* it was that made him strong. And so, in the midst of confusions and unutterable incongruities (as all growth is confused), did this of Royalty, with Loyalty environing it, spring up; and grow mysteriously, subduing and assimilating (for a principle of Life was in it); till it also had grown world-great, and was among the main Facts of our modern existence. Such a Fact, that Louis XIV., for example, could answer the expostulatory Magistrate with his '*L'État c'est moi* (The State? I am the State)'; and be replied to by silence and abashed looks. So far had accident and forethought; had your Louis Elevenths, with the leaden Virgin in their hatband, and torture-wheels and conical *oubliettes* (man-eating!) under their feet; your Henri Fourths, with their prophesied social millennium, 'when every peasant should have his fowl in the pot'; and on the whole, the fertility of this most fertile Existence (named of Good and Evil),—brought it, in the matter of the Kingship. Wondrous! Concerning which may we not again say, that in the huge mass of Evil, as it rolls and swells, there is ever some Good working imprisoned; working towards deliverance and triumph?

How such Ideals do realise themselves; and grow, wondrously, from amid the incongruous ever-fluctuating chaos of the Actual: this is what World-History, if it teach anything, has to teach us. How they grow; and, after long stormy growth, bloom out mature, supreme; then quickly (for the blossom is brief) fall into decay; sorrowfully dwindle; and crumble down, or rush down, noisily or noiselessly disappearing. The blossom is so brief; as of some centennial Cactus-flower, which after a century of waiting shines out for hours! Thus from the day when rough Clovis, in the Champ de Mars, in sight of his whole army, had to cleave retributively the head of that rough Frank, with sudden battle-axe, and the fierce words, 'It was thus thou clavest the vase' (St. Remi's and mine) 'at Soissons,' forward to Louis the Grand and his *L'État c'est moi*, we count some twelve hundred years: and now this the very next Louis is dying, and so much dying with him!—Nay, thus too, if Catholicism, with and against Feudalism (but *not* against Nature and her bounty), gave us English a Shakspeare and Era of Shakspeare, and so produced a blossom of Catholicism—it was not till Catholicism itself, so far as Law could abolish it, had been abolished here.

But of those decadent ages in which no Ideal either grows or blossoms? When Belief and Loyalty have passed away, and only the cant and false echo of them remains; and all Solemnity has become Pageantry; and the Creed of persons in authority has become one of two things: an Imbecility or a Macchiavelism? Alas, of these ages World-History can take no notice; they have to become compressed more and more, and finally suppressed in the Annals of Mankind; blotted out as spurious,—which indeed they are. Hapless ages: wherein, if ever in any, it is an unhappiness to be born. To be born, and to learn only, by every tradition and example, that God's Universe is Belial's and a Lie; and 'the Supreme Quack' the hierarch of men! In which mournfulest faith, nevertheless, do we not see whole generations (two, and sometimes even three successively) live, what they call living; and vanish,—without chance of reappearance?

In such a decadent age, or one fast verging that way, had our poor Louis been born. Grant also that if the French Kingship had not, by course of Nature, long to live, he of all men was the man to accelerate Nature. The Blossom of French Royalty, cactus-like, has accordingly made an astonishing progress. In those Metz days, it was still standing with all its petals, though bedimmed by Orleans Regents and *Roué* Ministers and Cardinals; but now, in 1774, we behold it bald, and the virtue nigh gone out of it.

Disastrous indeed does it look with those same 'realised ideals,' one and all! The Church, which in its palmy season, seven hundred years ago, could make an Emperor wait barefoot, in penance-shirt, three days, in the snow, has for centuries seen itself decaying; reduced even to forget old purposes and enmities, and join interest with the Kingship: on this younger strength it would fain stay its decrepitude; and these two will henceforth stand and fall together. Alas, the Sorbonne still sits there, in its old mansion; but mumbles only jargon of dotage, and no longer leads the consciences of men: not the Sorbonne; it is *Encyclopédies*, *Philosophie*, and who knows what nameless innumerable multitude of ready Writers, profane Singers, Romancers, Players, Disputators, and Pamphleteers, that now form the Spiritual Guidance of the world. The world's Practical Guidance too is lost, or has glided into the same miscellaneous hands. Who is it that the King (*Able-man*, named also *Roi*, *Rex*, or Director) now guides?

His own huntsmen and prickers: when there is to be no hunt, it is well said, '*Le Roi ne fera rien* (Today his Majesty will do *nothing*).'[1] He lives and lingers there, because he is living there, and none has yet laid hands on him.

The nobles, in like manner, have nearly ceased either to guide or misguide; and are now, as their master is, little more than ornamental figures. It is long since they have done with butchering one another or their king: the Workers, protected, encouraged by Majesty, have ages ago built walled towns, and there ply their craft; will permit no Robber Baron to 'live by the saddle,' but maintain a gallows to prevent it. Ever since that period of the *Fronde*, the Noble has changed his fighting sword into a court rapier; and now loyally attends his king as ministering satellite; divides the spoil, not now by violence and murder, but by soliciting and finesse. These men call themselves supports of the throne: singular gilt-pasteboard *caryatides* in that singular edifice! For the rest, their privileges every way are now much curtailed. That Law authorising a Seigneur, as he returned from hunting, to kill not more than two Serfs, and refresh his feet in their warm blood and bowels, has fallen into perfect desuetude,—and even into incredibility; for if Deputy Lapoule can believe in it, and call for the abrogation of it, so cannot we.[2] No Charolois, for these last fifty years, though never so fond of shooting, has been in use to bring down slaters and plumbers, and see them roll from their roofs;[3] but contents himself with partridges and grouse. Close-viewed, their industry and function is that of dressing gracefully and eating sumptuously. As for their debauchery and depravity, it is perhaps unexampled since the era of Tiberius and Commodus. Nevertheless, one has still partly a feeling with the lady Maréchale:

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[1] *Mémoires sur la Vie privée de Marie Antoinette*, par Madame Campan (Paris, 1826), i. 12.

[2] *Histoire de la Révolution Française*, par Deux Amis de la Liberté (Paris, 1792), ii. 212.

[3] Lacretelle, *Histoire de France pendant le* 18^{me} *Siècle* (Paris, 1819), i. 271.

'Depend upon it, Sir, God thinks twice before damning a man of that quality.'[1] These people, of old, surely had virtues, uses; or they could not have been there. Nay, one virtue they are still required to have (for mortal man cannot live without a conscience): the virtue of perfect readiness to fight duels.

Such are the shepherds of the people: and now how fares it with the flock? With the flock, as is inevitable, it fares ill, and ever worse. They are not tended, they are only regularly shorn. They are sent for, to do statute-labour, to pay statute-taxes; to fatten battle-fields (named 'bed of honour') with their bodies, in quarrels which are not theirs; their hand and toil is in every possession of man; but for themselves they have little or no possession. Untaught, uncomforted, unfed; to pine stagnantly in thick obscuration, in squalid destitution and obstruction: this is the lot of the millions; *peuple taillable et corvéable à merci et miséricorde.* In Brittany they once rose in revolt at the first introduction of Pendulum Clocks; thinking it had something to do with the *Gabelle.* Paris requires to be cleared out periodically by the Police; and the horde of hunger-stricken vagabonds to be sent wandering again over space—for a time. 'During one such periodical clearance,' says Lacretelle, 'in May 1750, the Police had presumed withal to carry off some reputable people's children, in the hope of extorting ransoms for them. The mothers fill the public places with cries of despair; crowds gather, get excited; so many women in distraction run about exaggerating the alarm: an absurd and horrid fable rises among the people; it is said that the doctors have ordered a Great Person to take baths of young human blood for the restoration of his own, all spoiled by debaucheries. Some of the rioters,' adds Lacretelle, quite coolly, 'were hanged on the following days': the Police went on.[2] O ye poor naked wretches! and this, then, is your inarticulate cry to Heaven, as of a dumb tortured animal, crying from uttermost depths of pain and debasement? Do these azure skies, like a dead crystalline vault, only reverberate the echo of it on you? Respond to it only by 'hanging on the following days'?—Not so: not for ever! Ye are heard in Heaven. And the answer too will come,—in a horror of great darkness, and shakings of the world, and a cup of trembling which all the nations shall drink.

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[1] Dulaure, vii. 261.

[2] Lacretelle, iii. 175.

Remark, meanwhile, how from amid the wrecks and dust on this universal Decay new Powers are fashioning themselves, adapted to the new time and its destinies. Besides the old Noblesse, originally of Fighters, there is a new recognised Noblesse of Lawyers; whose gala-day and proud battle-day even now is. An unrecognised Noblesse of Commerce; powerful enough, with money in its pocket. Lastly, powerfulest of all, least recognised of all, a Noblesse of Literature; without steel on their thigh, without gold in their purse, but with the 'grand thaumaturgic faculty of Thought' in their head. French Philosophism has arisen; in which little word how much do we include! Here, indeed, lies properly the cardinal symptom of the whole widespread malady. Faith is gone out; Scepticism is come in. Evil abounds and accumulates; no man has Faith to withstand it, to amend it, to begin by amending himself; it must even go on accumulating. While hollow languor and vacuity is the lot of the Upper, and want and stagnation of the Lower, and universal misery is very certain, what other thing is certain? That a Lie cannot be believed! Philosophism knows only this: her other belief is mainly, that in spiritual supersensual matters no Belief is possible. Unhappy! Nay, as yet the Contradiction of a Lie is some kind of Belief; but the Lie with its Contradiction once swept away, what will remain? The five unsatiated Senses will remain, the sixth insatiable Sense (of vanity); the whole *dæmonic* nature of man will remain,—hurled forth to rage blindly without rule or rein; savage itself, yet with all the tools and weapons of civilisation: a spectacle new in History.

In such a France, as in a Powder-tower, where fire unquenched and now unquenchable is smoking and smouldering all round, has Louis xv. lain down to die. With Pompadourism and Dubarryism, his Fleur-de-lis has been shamefully struck down in all lands and on all seas; Poverty invades even the Royal Exchequer, and Tax-farming can squeeze out no more; there is a quarrel of twenty-five years' standing with the Parlement; everywhere Want, Dishonesty, Unbelief, and hotbrained Sciolists for state-physicians: it is a portentous hour.

Such things can the eye of History see in this sick-room of King Louis, which were invisible to the Courtiers there. It is twenty years, gone Christmas-day, since Lord Chesterfield, summing up what he had noted of this same France, wrote, and sent off by post, the following words, that have become memorable: 'In short, all the symptoms which I have ever met with in History, previous to great Changes and Revolutions in government, now exist and daily increase in France.'[1]

CHAPTER III

VIATICUM

For the present, however, the grand question with the Governors of France is: Shall extreme unction, or other ghostly viaticum (to Louis, not to France), be administered?

It is a deep question. For, if administered, if so much as spoken of, must not, on the very threshold of the business, Witch Dubarry vanish; hardly to return should Louis even recover? With her vanishes Duke d'Aiguillon and Company, and all their Armida-Palace, as was said; Chaos swallows the whole again, and there is left nothing but a smell of brimstone. But then, on the other hand, what will the Dauphinists and Choiseulists say? Nay what may the royal martyr himself say, should he happen to get deadly worse, without getting delirious? For the present, he still kisses the Dubarry hand; so we, from the anteroom, can note: but afterwards? Doctors' bulletins may run as they are ordered, but it is 'confluent small-pox,'—of which, as is whispered too, the Gatekeeper's once so buxom Daughter lies ill: and Louis xv. is not a man to be trifled with in his viaticum. Was he not wont to catechise his very girls in the *Parc-aux-cerfs*, and pray with and for them, that they might preserve their—orthodoxy?[1] A strange fact, not an unexampled one; for there is no animal so strange as man.

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[1] Chesterfield's *Letters*: December 25th, 1753.

For the moment, indeed, it were all well, could Archbishop Beaumont but be prevailed upon—to wink with one eye! Alas, Beaumont would himself so fain do it: for, singular to tell, the Church too, and whole posthumous hope of Jesuitism, now hangs by the apron of this same unmentionable woman. But then 'the force of public opinion'? Rigorous Christophe de Beaumont, who has spent his life in persecuting hysterical Jansenists and incredulous Non-confessors; or even their dead bodies, if no better might be,—how shall he now open Heaven's gate, and give Absolution with the *corpus delicti* still under his nose? Our Grand-Almoner Roche-Aymon, for his part, will not higgle with a royal sinner about turning of the key: but there are other Churchmen; there is a King's Confessor, foolish Abbé Moudon; and Fanaticism and Decency are not yet extinct. On the whole, what is to be done? The doors can be well watched; the Medical Bulletin adjusted; and much, as usual, be hoped for from time and chance.

The doors are well watched, no improper figure can enter. Indeed, few wish to enter; for the putrid infection reaches even to the *Œil-de-Bœuf*; so that 'more than fifty fall sick, and ten die.' Mesdames the Princesses alone wait at the loathsome sick-bed; impelled by filial piety. The three Princesses, *Graille*, *Chiffe*, *Coche* (Rag, Snip, Pig, as he was wont to name them), are assiduous there; when all have fled.

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[1] Dulaure (viii. 217); Besenval, etc.

The fourth Princess, *Loque* (Dud), as we guess, is already in the Nunnery, and can only give her orisons. Poor *Graille* and Sisterhood, they have never known a Father; such is the hard bargain Grandeur must make. Scarcely at the *Débotter* (when Royalty took off its boots) could they snatch up their 'enormous hoops, gird the long train round their waists, huddle on their black cloaks of taffeta up to the very chin'; and so, in fit appearance of full dress, 'every evening at six,' walk majestically in; receive their royal kiss on the brow; and then walk majestically out again, to embroidery, small-scandal, prayers, and vacancy. If Majesty came some morning, with coffee of its own making, and swallowed it with them hastily while the dogs were uncoupling for the hunt, it was received as a grace of Heaven.[1] Poor withered ancient women! in the wild tossings that yet await your fragile existence, before it be crushed and broken; as ye fly through hostile countries, over tempestuous seas, are almost taken by the Turks; and wholly, in the Sansculottic Earthquake, know not your right hand from your left, be this always an assured place in your remembrance: for the act was good and loving! To us also it is a little sunny spot, in that dismal howling waste, where we hardly find another.

Meanwhile, what shall an impartial prudent Courtier do? In these delicate circumstances, while not only death or life, but even sacrament or no sacrament, is a question, the skilfulest may falter. Few are so happy as the Duke d'Orléans and the Prince de Condé; who can themselves, with volatile salts, attend the King's antechamber; and, at the same time, send their brave sons (Duke de Chartres, *Egalité* that is to be; Duke de Bourbon, one day Condé too, and famous among Dotards) to wait upon the Dauphin. With another few, it is a resolution taken; *jacta est alea.* Old Richelieu,—when Archbishop Beaumont, driven by public opinion, is at last for entering the sick-room,—will twitch him by the rochet, into a recess; and there, with his old dissipated mastiff-face, and the oiliest vehemence, be seen pleading (and even, as we judge by Beaumont's change of colour, prevailing) 'that the King be not killed by a proposition in Divinity.' Duke de Fronsac, son of Richelieu, can follow his father: when the Curé of Versailles whimpers something about sacraments, he will threaten to 'throw him out of the window if he mention such a thing.'

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[1] Campan, i. 11-36.

Happy these, we may say; but to the rest that hover between two opinions, is it not trying? He who would understand to what a pass Catholicism, and much else, had now got; and how the symbols of the Holiest have become gambling-dice of the Basest,—must read the narrative of those things by Besenval, and Soulavie, and the other Court Newsmen of the time. He will see the Versailles Galaxy all scattered asunder, grouped into new ever-shifting Constellations. There are nods and sagacious glances; go-betweens, silk dowagers mysteriously gliding, with smiles for this constellation, sighs for that: there is tremor, of hope or desperation, in several hearts. There is the pale grinning Shadow of Death, ceremoniously ushered along by another grinning Shadow, of Etiquette: at intervals the growl of Chapel Organs, like prayer by machinery; proclaiming, as in a kind of horrid diabolic horse-laughter, *Vanity of vanities, all is Vanity!*

CHAPTER IV

LOUIS THE UNFORGOTTEN

Poor Louis! With these it is a hollow phantasmagory, where like mimes they mope and mowl, and utter false sounds for hire; but with thee it is frightful earnest.

Frightful to all men is Death; from of old named King of Terrors. Our little compact home of an Existence, where we dwelt complaining, yet as in a home, is passing, in dark agonies, into an Unknown of Separation, Foreignness, unconditioned Possibility. The Heathen Emperor asks of his soul: Into what places art thou now departing? The Catholic King must answer: To the Judgment-bar of the Most High God! Yes, it is a summing-up of Life; a final settling, and giving-in the 'account of the deeds done in the body': they are done now; and lie there unalterable, and do bear their fruits, long as Eternity shall last.

Louis xv. had always the kingliest abhorrence of Death. Unlike that praying Duke of Orleans, *Egalité's* grandfather,—for indeed several of them had a touch of madness,—who honestly believed that there was no Death! He, if the Court Newsmen can be believed, started up once on a time, glowing with sulphurous contempt and indignation on his poor Secretary, who had stumbled on the words, *feu roi d'Espagne* (the late King of Spain): '*Feu roi, Monsieur?*'—'*Monseigneur*,' hastily answered the trembling but adroit man of business, '*c'est une titre qu'ils prennent* ('tis a title they take).'[1] Louis, we say, was not so happy; but he did what he could. He would not suffer Death to be spoken of; avoided the sight of churchyards, funereal monuments, and whatsoever could bring it to mind. It is the resource of the Ostrich; who, hard hunted, sticks his foolish head in the ground, and would fain forget that his foolish unseeing body is not unseen too. Or sometimes, with a spasmodic antagonism, significant of the same thing, and of more, he *would* go; or stopping his court carriages, would send into churchyards, and ask 'how many new graves there were today,' though it gave his poor Pompadour the disagreeablest qualms. We can figure the thought of Louis that day, when, all royally caparisoned for hunting, he met, at some sudden turning in the Wood of Senart, a ragged Peasant with a coffin: 'For whom?'—It was for a poor brother slave, whom Majesty had sometimes noticed slaving in those quarters. 'What did he die of?'—'Of hunger':—the King gave his steed the spur.[2]

But figure his thought, when Death is now clutching at his own heart-strings; unlooked for, inexorable! Yes, poor Louis, Death has found thee. No palace walls or life-guards, gorgeous tapestries or gilt buckram of stiffest ceremonial could keep him out; but he is here, here at thy very life-breath, and will extinguish it. Thou, whose whole existence hitherto was a chimera and scenic show, at length becomest a reality: sumptuous Versailles bursts asunder, like a dream, into void Immensity; Time is done, and all the scaffolding of Time falls wrecked with hideous clangour round thy soul: the pale Kingdoms yawn open; there must thou enter, naked, all unking'd, and await what is appointed thee! Unhappy man, there as thou turnest, in dull agony, on thy bed of weariness, what a thought is thine! Purgatory and Hell-fire, now all-too possible, in the prospect: in the retrospect,—alas, what thing didst thou do that were not better undone; what mortal didst thou generously help; what sorrow hadst thou mercy on? Do the 'five hundred thousand' ghosts, who sank shamefully on so many battle-fields from Rossbach to Quebec, that thy Harlot might take revenge for an epigram,—crowd round thee in this hour? Thy foul Harem; the curses of mothers, the tears and infamy of daughters? Miserable man! thou 'hast done evil as thou couldst': thy whole existence seems one hideous abortion and mistake of Nature; the use and meaning of thee not yet known. Wert thou a fabulous Griffin, *devouring* the works of men; daily dragging virgins to thy cave;—clad also in scales that no spear would pierce: no spear but Death's? A Griffin not fabulous but real! Frightful, O Louis, seem these moments for thee.—We will pry no further into the horrors of a sinner's deathbed.

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[1] Besenval, i. 199.

[2] Campan, iii. 39.

And yet let no meanest man lay flattering unction to his soul. Louis was a Ruler; but art not thou also one? His wide France, look at it from the Fixed Stars (themselves not yet Infinitude), is no wider than thy narrow brickfield, where thou too didst faithfully, or didst unfaithfully. Man, 'Symbol of Eternity imprisoned into Time!' it is not thy works, which are all mortal, infinitely little, and the greatest no greater than the least, but only the Spirit thou workest in, that can have worth or continuance.

But reflect, in any case, what a life-problem this of poor Louis, when he rose as *Bien-Aimé* from that Metz sick-bed, really was! What son of Adam could have swayed such incoherences into coherence? Could he? Blindest Fortune alone has cast *him* on the top of it: he swims there; can as little sway it as the drift-log sways the wind-tossed moon-stirred Atlantic. 'What have I done to be so loved?' he said then. He may say now: What have I done to be so hated? Thou hast done nothing, poor Louis! Thy fault is properly even this, that thou didst *nothing*. What could poor Louis do? Abdicate, and wash his hands of it,—in favour of the first that would accept! Other clear wisdom there was none for him. As it was, he stood gazing dubiously the absurdest mortal extant, a very Solecism Incarnate, into the absurdest confused world;—wherein at last nothing seemed so certain as this, That he, the incarnate Solecism, had five senses; that there were Flying Tables (*Tables Volantes*, which vanish through the floor, to come back reloaded), and a *Parc-aux-cerfs*.

Whereby at least we have again this historical curiosity: a human being in an original position; swimming passively, as on some boundless 'Mother of Dead Dogs,' towards issues which he partly saw. For Louis had withal a kind of insight in him. So, when a new Minister of Marine, or what else it might be, came announcing his new era, the Scarlet-woman would hear from the lips of Majesty at supper: 'Yes, he spread out his ware like another; promised the beautifulest things in the world; not a thing of which will come: he does not know this region; he will see.' Or again: ''Tis the twentieth time I have heard all that; France will never get a Navy, I believe.' How touching also was this: 'If *I* were Lieutenant of Police, I would prohibit those Paris cabriolets.'[1]

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[1] *Journal de Madame de Hausset*, p. 293, etc.

Doomed mortal;—for is it not a doom to be Solecism incarnate! A new *Roi Fainéant*, King Donothing; but with the strangest new *Mayor of the Palace*: no bow-legged Pepin now for *Mayor*, but that same cloud-capt, fire-breathing Spectre of DEMOCRACY; incalculable, which is enveloping the world!——Was Louis, then, no wickeder than this or the other private Donothing and Eatall; such as we often enough see, under the name of Man of Pleasure, cumbering God's diligent Creation, for a time? Say, wretcheder! His Life-solecism was seen and felt of a whole scandalised world; him endless Oblivion cannot engulf, and swallow to endless depths,—not yet for a generation or two.

However, be this as it will, we remark, not without interest, that 'on the evening of the 4th,' Dame Dubarry issues from the sick-room, with perceptible 'trouble in her visage.' It is the fourth evening of May, year of Grace 1774. Such a whispering in the Œil-de-Bœuf! Is he dying, then? What can be said is, that Dubarry seems making up her packages; she sails weeping through her gilt boudoirs, as if taking leave. D'Aiguillon and Company are near their last card; nevertheless they will not yet throw up the game. But as for the sacramental controversy, it is as good as settled without being mentioned; Louis sends for his Abbé Moudon in the course of next night; is confessed by him, some say for the space of 'seventeen minutes,' and demands the sacraments of his own accord.

Nay already, in the afternoon, behold is not this your Sorceress Dubarry with the handkerchief at her eyes, mounting D'Aiguillon's chariot; rolling off in his Duchess's consolatory arms? She is gone: and her place knows her no more. Vanish, false Sorceress; into Space! Needless to hover at neighbouring Ruel; for thy day is done. Shut are the royal palace-gates for evermore; hardly in coming years shalt thou, under cloud of night, descend once, in black domino, like a black night-bird, and disturb the fair Antoinette's music-party in the

Park; all Birds of Paradise flying from thee, and musical windpipes growing mute.[1] Thou unclean, yet unmalignant, not unpitiable thing! What a course was thine: from that first trucklebed (in Joan of Arc's country) where thy mother bore thee, with tears, to an unnamed father: forward, through lowest subterranean depths, and over highest sunlit heights, of Harlotdom and Rascaldom—to the guillotine-axe, which shears away thy vainly whimpering head! Rest there uncursed; only buried and abolished: what else befitted thee?

Louis, meanwhile, is in considerable impatience for his sacraments; sends more than once to the window, to see whether they are not coming. Be of comfort, Louis, what comfort thou canst: they are under way, those sacraments. Towards six in the morning, they arrive. Cardinal Grand-Almoner Roche-Aymon is here in pontificals, with his pyxes and his tools: he approaches the royal pillow; elevates his wafer; mutters or seems to mutter somewhat;—and so (as the Abbé Georgel, in words that stick to one, expresses it) has Louis 'made the *amende honorable* to God': so does your Jesuit construe it.—'*Wa, Wa*,' as the wild Clotaire groaned out, when life was departing, 'what great God is this that pulls down the strength of the strongest kings!'[2]

The *amende honorable*, what 'legal apology' you will, to God:—but not, if D'Aiguillon can help it, to man. Dubarry still hovers in his mansion at Ruel; and while there is life, there is hope. Grand-Almoner Roche-Aymon, accordingly (for he seems to be in the secret), has no sooner seen his pyxes and gear repacked, than he is stepping majestically forth again, as if the work were done! But King's Confessor Abbé Moudon starts forward; with anxious acidulent face, twitches him by the sleeve; whispers in his ear. Whereupon the poor Cardinal has to turn round; and declare audibly, 'That his Majesty repents of any subjects of scandal he may have given (*a pu donner*); and purposes, by the strength of Heaven assisting him, to avoid the like—for the future!' Words listened to by Richelieu with mastiff-face, growing blacker; and answered to, aloud, 'with an epithet,'—which Besenval will not repeat. Old Richelieu, conqueror of Minorca, companion of Flying-Table orgies, perforator of bedroom walls,[1] is thy day also done?

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[1] Campan, i. 197.

[2] Gregorius Turonensis, *Histor.* lib. iv. cap. 21.

Alas, the Chapel organs may keep going; the Shrine of Sainte Geneviève be let down, and pulled up again,—without effect. In the evening the whole Court, with Dauphin and Dauphiness, assist at the Chapel: priests are hoarse with chanting their 'Prayers of Forty Hours'; and the heaving bellows blow. Almost frightful! For the very heaven blackens; battering rain-torrents dash, with thunder; almost drowning the organ's voice: and electric fire-flashes make the very flambeaux on the altar pale. So that the most, as we are told, retired, when it was over, with hurried steps, 'in a state of meditation (*recueillement*),' and said little or nothing.[2]

So it has lasted for the better half of a fortnight; the Dubarry gone almost a week. Besenval says, all the world was getting impatient *que cela finît*; that poor Louis would have done with it. It is now the 10th of May 1774. He will soon have done now.

This tenth May day falls into the loathsome sick-bed; but dull, unnoticed there: for they that look out of the windows are quite darkened; the cistern-wheel moves discordant on its axis; Life, like a spent steed, is panting towards the goal. In their remote apartments, Dauphin and Dauphiness stand road-ready; all grooms and equerries booted and spurred: waiting for some signal to escape the house of pestilence.[3] And, hark! across the Œil-de-Bœuf, what sound is that; sound 'terrible and absolutely like thunder'? It is the rush of the whole Court, rushing as in wager, to salute the new Sovereigns: Hail to your Majesties! The Dauphin and Dauphiness are King and Queen! Overpowered with many emotions, they two fall on their knees together, and, with streaming tears, exclaim, 'O God, guide us, protect us; we are too young to reign!'—Too young indeed.

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[1] Besenval, i. 159-172. Genlis; Duc de Levis, etc.

[2] Weber, *Mémoires concernant Marie-Antoinette* (London, 1809), i. 22.

[3] One grudges to interfere with the beautiful theatrical 'candle,' which Madame Campan (i. 79) has lit on this occasion, and blown out at the moment of death. What candles might be lit or blown out, in so large an Establishment as that of Versailles, no man at such distance would like to affirm: at the same

But thus, in any case, 'with a sound absolutely like thunder,' has the Horologe of Time struck, and an old Era passed away. The Louis that was, lies forsaken, a mass of abhorred clay; abandoned 'to some poor persons, and priests of the *Chapelle Ardente*,'—who make haste to put him 'in two lead coffins, pouring in abundant spirits of wine.' The new Louis with his Court is rolling towards Choisy, through the summer afternoon: the royal tears still flow; but a word mispronounced by Monseigneur d'Artois sets them all laughing, and they weep no more. Light mortals, how ye walk your light life-minuet, over bottomless abysses, divided from you by a film!

For the rest, the proper authorities felt that no Funeral could be too unceremonious. Besenval himself thinks it was unceremonious enough. Two carriages containing two noblemen of the usher species, and a Versailles clerical person; some score of mounted pages, some fifty palfreniers: these, with torches, but not so much as in black, start from Versailles on the second evening, with their leaden bier. At a high trot they start; and keep up that pace. For the gibes (*brocards*) of those Parisians, who stand planted in two rows, all the way to St. Denis, and 'give vent to their pleasantry, the characteristic of the nation,' do not tempt one to slacken. Towards midnight the vaults of St. Denis receive their own: unwept

time, as it was two o'clock in a May Afternoon, and these royal Stables must have been some five or six hundred yards from the royal sick-room, the 'candle' does threaten to go out in spite of us. It remains burning indeed—in her fantasy; throwing light on much in those *Mémoires* of hers.

by any eye of all these; if not by poor *Loque* his neglected Daughter's, whose Nunnery is hard by.

Him they crush down, and huddle under-ground, in this impatient way; him and his era of sin and tyranny and shame: for behold a New Era is come; the future all the brighter that the past was base.

BOOK SECOND

THE PAPER AGE

CHAPTER I

ASTRÆA REDUX

A PARADOXICAL philosopher, carrying to the uttermost length that aphorism of Montesquieu's, 'Happy the people whose annals are tiresome,' has said, 'Happy the people whose annals are vacant.' In which saying, mad as it looks, may there not still be found some grain of reason? For truly, as it has been written, 'Silence is divine,' and of Heaven; so in all earthly things too there is a silence which is better than any speech. Consider it well, the Event, the thing which can be spoken of and recorded, is it not, in all cases, some disruption, some solution of continuity? Were it even a glad Event, it involves change, involves loss (of active Force); and so far, either in the past or in the present, is an irregularity, a disease. Stillest perseverance were our blessedness; not dislocation and alteration,—could they be avoided.

The oak grows silently, in the forest, a thousand years; only in the thousandth year, when the woodman arrives with his axe, is there heard an echoing through the solitudes; and the oak announces itself when, with far-sounding crash, it *falls*. How silent too was the planting of the acorn; scattered from the lap of some wandering wind! Nay, when our oak flowered, or put on its leaves (its glad Events), what shout of proclamation could there be? Hardly from the most observant a word of recognition. These things *befell* not, they were slowly *done*; not in an hour, but through the flight of days: what was to be said of it? This hour seemed altogether as the last was, as the next would be.

It is thus everywhere that foolish Rumour babbles not of what was done, but of what was misdone or undone; and foolish History (ever, more or less, the written epitomised synopsis of Rumour) knows so little that were not as well unknown. Attila Invasions, Walter-the-Penniless Crusades, Sicilian Vespers, Thirty-Years Wars: mere sin and misery; not work, but hindrance of work! For the Earth, all this while, was yearly green and yellow with her kind harvests; the hand of the craftsman, the mind of the thinker rested not: and so, after all, and in spite of all, we have this so glorious high-domed blossoming World; concerning which, poor History may well ask, with wonder, Whence *it* came? She knows so little of it, knows so much of what obstructed it, what would have rendered it impossible. Such, nevertheless, by necessity or foolish choice, is her rule and practice; whereby that paradox, 'Happy the people whose annals are vacant,' is not without its true side.

And yet, what seems more pertinent to note here, there is a stillness, not of unobstructed growth, but of passive inertness, the symptom of imminent downfall. As victory is silent, so is defeat. Of the opposing forces the weaker has resigned itself; the stronger marches on, noiseless now, but rapid, inevitable: the fall and overturn will not be noiseless. How all grows, and has its period, even as the herbs of the fields, be it annual, centennial, millennial! All grows and dies, each by its own wondrous laws, in wondrous fashion of its own; spiritual things most wondrously of all. Inscrutable, to the wisest, are these latter; not to be prophesied of, or understood. If when the oak stands proudliest flourishing to the eye, you know that its heart is sound, it is not so with the man; how much less with the Society, with the Nation of men! Of such it may be affirmed even that the superficial aspect, that the inward feeling of full health, is generally ominous. For indeed it is of apoplexy, so to speak, and a plethoric lazy habit of body, that Churches, Kingships, Social Institutions, oftenest die. Sad, when such Institution plethorically says to itself, Take thy ease, thou hast goods laid up;—like the fool of the Gospel, to whom it was answered, Fool, *this night* thy life shall be required of thee!

Is it the healthy peace, or the ominous unhealthy, that rests on France, for these next Ten Years? Over which the Historian can pass lightly, without call to linger: for as yet events are not, much less performances. Time of sunniest stillness;—shall we call it, what all men thought it, the new Age of Gold? Call it at least, of Paper; which in many ways is the succedaneum of Gold. Bank-paper, wherewith you can still buy when there is no gold left; Book-paper, splendent with Theories, Philosophies, Sensibilities,—beautiful art, not only of revealing Thought, but also of so beautifully hiding from us the want of Thought! Paper is made from the *rags* of things that did once exist; there are endless excellences in Paper.—What wisest Philosophe, in this halcyon uneventful period, could prophesy that there was approaching, big with darkness and confusion, the event of events? Hope ushers in a Revolution,—as earthquakes are preceded by bright weather. On the Fifth of May, fifteen years hence, old Louis will not be sending for the Sacraments; but a new Louis, his grandson, with the whole pomp of astonished intoxicated France, will be opening the States-General.

Dubarrydom and its D'Aiguillons are gone for ever. There is a young, still docile, well-intentioned King; a young, beautiful and bountiful, well-intentioned Queen; and with them all France, as it were, become young. Maupeou and his Parlement have to vanish into thick night; respectable Magistrates, not indifferent to the Nation, were it only for having been opponents of the Court, descend now unchained from their 'steep rocks at Croe in Combrailles' and elsewhere, and return singing praises: the old Parlement of Paris resumes its functions. Instead of a profligate bankrupt Abbé Terray, we have now, for Controller-General, a virtuous philosophic Turgot, with a whole Reformed France in his head. By whom whatsoever is wrong, in Finance or otherwise, will be righted,—as far as possible. Is it not as if Wisdom herself were henceforth to have seat and voice in the Council of Kings? Turgot has taken office with the noblest plainness of speech to that effect; been listened to with the noblest royal trustfulness.[1] It is true, as King Louis objects, 'They say he never goes to mass'; but liberal France likes him little worse for that; liberal France answers, 'The Abbé Terray always went.' Philosophism sees, for the first time, a Philosophe (or even a Philosopher) in office: she in all things will applausively second him; neither will light old Maurepas obstruct, if he can easily help it.

Then how 'sweet' are the manners; vice 'losing all its deformity'; becoming *decent* (as established things, making regulations for themselves, do); becoming almost a kind of 'sweet' virtue! Intelligence so abounds; irradiated by wit and the art of conversation. Philosophism sits joyful in her glittering saloons, the dinner-guest of Opulence grown ingenuous, the very nobles proud to sit by her; and preaches, lifted up over all Bastilles, a coming millennium. From far Ferney, Patriarch Voltaire gives sign: veterans Diderot, D'Alembert have lived to see this day; these with their younger Marmontels, Morellets, Chamforts, Raynals, make glad the spicy board of rich ministering Dowager, of philosophic Farmer-General. O nights and suppers of the gods! Of a truth, the long-demonstrated will now be done: 'the Age of Revolutions approaches' (as Jean Jacques wrote), but then of happy blessed ones. Man awakens from his long somnambulism; chases the Phantasms that beleaguered and bewitched him. Behold the new morning glittering down the eastern steeps; fly, false Phantasms, from its shafts of light; let the Absurd fly utterly, forsaking this lower Earth for ever. It is Truth and *Astræa Redux* that (in the shape of Philosophism) henceforth reign. For what imaginable purpose was man made, if not to be 'happy'? By victorious Analysis, and Progress of the Species, happiness enough now awaits him. Kings can become philosophers; or else philosophers Kings. Let but Society be once rightly constituted,—by victorious Analysis. The stomach that is empty shall be filled; the throat that is dry shall be wetted with wine. Labour itself shall be all one as rest; not grievous, but joyous. Wheat-fields, one would think, cannot come to grow untilled; no man made clayey, or made weary thereby;—unless indeed machinery will do it? Gratuitous Tailors and Restaurateurs may start up, at fit intervals, one as yet sees not how. But if each will, according to rule of Benevolence, have a care for all, then surely—no one will be uncared for. Nay, who knows but, by sufficiently victorious Analysis, 'human life may be indefinitely lengthened,' and men get rid of Death, as they have already done of the Devil? We shall then be happy in spite of Death and the Devil.—So preaches magniloquent Philosophism her *Redeunt Saturnia regna.*

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[1] Turgot's Letter: Condorcet, *Vie de Turgot* (*Œuvres de Condorcet*, t. v.), p. 67. The date is 24th August 1774.

The prophetic song of Paris and its Philosophes is audible enough in the Versailles Œil-de-Bœuf; and the Œil-de-Bœuf, intent chiefly on nearer blessedness, can answer, at worst, with a polite 'Why not?' Good old cheery Maurepas is too joyful a Prime Minister to dash the world's joy. Sufficient for the day be its own evil. Cheery old man, he cuts his jokes, and hovers careless along; his cloak well adjusted to the wind, if so be he may please all persons. The simple young King, whom a Maurepas cannot think of troubling with business, has retired into the interior apartments; taciturn, irresolute; though with a sharpness of temper at times: he, at length, determines on a little smith-work; and so, in apprenticeship with a Sieur Gamain (whom one day he shall have little cause to bless), is learning to make locks.[1] It appears further, he understood Geography; and could read English. Unhappy young King, his childlike trust in that foolish old Maurepas deserved another return. But friend and foe, destiny and himself have combined to do him hurt.

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[1] Campan, i. 125.

Meanwhile the fair young Queen, in her halls of state, walks like a goddess of Beauty, the cynosure of all eyes; as yet mingles not with affairs; heeds not the future; least of all, dreads it. Weber and Campan[1] have pictured her, there within the royal tapestries, in bright boudoirs, baths, peignoirs, and the Grand and Little Toilette; with a whole brilliant world waiting obsequious on her glance: fair young daughter of Time, what things has Time in store for thee! Like Earth's brightest Appearance, she moves gracefully, environed with the grandeur of Earth: a reality, and yet a magic vision; for, behold, shall not utter Darkness swallow it! The soft young heart adopts orphans, portions meritorious maids, delights to succour the poor,—such poor as come picturesquely in her way; and sets the fashion of doing it; for, as was said, Benevolence has now begun reigning. In her Duchess de Polignac, in her Princess de Lamballe, she enjoys something almost like friendship: now too, after seven long years, she has a child, and soon even a Dauphin, of her own; can reckon herself, as Queens go, happy in a husband.

Events? The grand events are but charitable Feasts of Morals (*Fêtes des mœurs*), with their Prizes and Speeches; Poissarde Processions to the Dauphin's cradle; above all, Flirtations, their rise, progress, decline and fall. There are Snow-statues raised by the poor in hard winter to a Queen who has given them fuel. There are masquerades, theatricals; beautifyings of little Trianon, purchase and repair of St. Cloud; journeyings from the summer Court-Elysium to the winter one. There are poutings and grudgings from the Sardinian Sisters-in-law (for the Princes too are wedded); little jealousies, which Court-Etiquette can moderate. Wholly the lightest-hearted frivolous foam of Existence; yet an artfully refined foam; pleasant were it not so costly, like that which mantles on the wine of Champagne!

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[1] Campan, i. 100-151. Weber, i. 11-50.

Monsieur, the King's elder Brother, has set up for a kind of wit; and leans towards the Philosophe side. Monseigneur d'Artois pulls the mask from a fair impertinent; fights a duel in consequence,—almost drawing blood.[1] He has breeches of a kind new in this world;—a fabulous kind; 'four tall lackeys,' says Mercier, as if he had seen it, 'hold him up in the air, that he may fall into the garment without vestige of wrinkle; from which rigorous encasement the same four, in the same way, and with more effort, have to deliver him at night.'[2] This last is he who now, as a grey timeworn man, sits desolate at Grätz;[3] having winded up his destiny with the Three Days. In such sort are poor mortals swept and shovelled to and fro.

CHAPTER II

PETITION IN HIEROGLYPHS

With the working people, again, it is not so well. Unlucky! For there are from twenty to twenty-five millions of them. Whom, however, we lump together into a kind of dim compendious unity, monstrous but dim, far off, as the *canaille*; or, more humanely, as 'the masses.' Masses indeed: and yet, singular to say, if, with an effort of imagination, thou follow them, over broad France, into their clay hovels, into their garrets and hutches, the masses consist all of units. Every unit of whom has his own heart and sorrows; stands covered there with his own skin, and if you prick him he will bleed. O purple Sovereignty, Holiness, Reverence; thou, for example, Cardinal Grand-Almoner, with thy plush covering of honour, who hast thy hands strengthened with dignities and moneys, and art set on thy world watch-tower solemnly, in sight of God, for such ends,—what a thought: that every unit of these masses is a miraculous Man, even as thou thyself art; struggling, with vision or with blindness, for *his* infinite Kingdom (this life which he has got, once only, in the middle of Eternities); with a spark of the Divinity, what thou callest an immortal soul, in him!

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[1] Besenval, ii. 282-330. [2] Mercier, *Nouv. Paris*, iii. 147. [3] A.D. 1834.

Dreary, languid do these struggle in their obscure remoteness; their hearth cheerless, their diet thin. For them, in this world, rises no Era of Hope; hardly now in the other,—if it be not hope in the gloomy rest of Death, for their faith too is failing. Untaught, uncomforted, unfed! A dumb generation; their voice only an inarticulate cry: spokesman, in the King's Council, in the world's forum, they have none that finds credence. At rare intervals (as now, in 1775), they will fling down their hoes and hammers; and, to the astonishment of thinking mankind,[1] flock hither and thither, dangerous, aimless; get the length even of Versailles. Turgot is altering the Corn-trade, abrogating the absurdest Corn-laws; there is dearth, real, or were it even 'factitious'; an indubitable scarcity of bread. And so, on the second day of May 1775, these waste multitudes do here, at Versailles Château, in wide-spread wretchedness, in sallow faces, squalor, winged raggedness, present, as in legible hieroglyphic writing, their Petition of Grievances. The Château gates have to be shut; but the King will appear on the balcony, and speak to them. They have seen the King's face; their Petition of Grievances has been, if not read, looked at. For answer, two of them are hanged, on a 'new gallows forty feet high'; and the rest driven back to their dens,—for a time.

Clearly a difficult 'point' for Government, that of dealing with these masses;—if indeed it be not rather the sole point and problem of Government, and all other points mere accidental crotchets, superficialities, and beatings of the wind! For let Charter-Chests, Use and Wont, Law common and special say what they will, the masses count to so many millions of units; made, to all appearance, by God,—whose Earth this is declared to be. Besides, these people are not without ferocity; they have sinews and indignation. Do but look what holiday old Marquis Mirabeau, the crabbed old Friend of Men, looked on, in these same years, from his lodging, at the Baths of Mont d'Or: 'The savages descending in torrents from the mountains; our people ordered not to go out. The Curate in surplice and stole; Justice in its peruke; Marechausée sabre in hand, guarding the place, till the bagpipes can begin. The dance interrupted, in a quarter of an hour, by battle; the cries, the squealings of children, of infirm persons, and other assistants, tarring them on, as the rabble does when dogs fight: frightful men, or rather frightful wild-animals, clad in jupes of coarse woollen, with large girdles of leather, studded with copper nails; of gigantic stature, heightened by high wooden-clogs (*sabots*); rising on tiptoe to see the fight; tramping time to it; rubbing their sides with their elbows: their faces haggard (*figures hâves*), and covered with their long greasy hair; the upper part of the visage waxing pale, the lower distorting itself into the attempt at a cruel laugh and a sort of ferocious impatience. And these people pay the *taille!* And you want further to take their salt from them! And you know not what it is you are stripping barer, or as you call it, governing; what, by the spurt of your pen, in its cold dastard indifference, you will fancy you can starve always with impunity; always till the catastrophe come!—Ah Madame, such Government by Blindman's-buff, stumbling along too far, will end in the General Overturn (*culbute générale*).'[1]

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[1] Lacretelle, *France pendant le* 18^{me} *Siècle*, ii. 455. *Biographie Universelle*, § Turgot (by Durozoir).

Undoubtedly a dark feature this in an Age of Gold,—Age, at least, of Paper and Hope! Meanwhile, trouble us not with thy prophecies, O croaking Friend of Men: 'tis long that we have heard such; and still the old world keeps wagging, in its old way.

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[1] *Mémoires de Mirabeau*, écrits par Lui-même, par son Père, son Oncle et son Fils Adoptif (Paris, 1834-5), ii. 186.

CHAPTER III

QUESTIONABLE

Or is this same Age of Hope itself but a simulacrum; as Hope too often is? Cloud-vapour with rainbows painted on it, beautiful to see, to sail towards,—which hovers over Niagara Falls? In that case, victorious Analysis will have enough to do.

Alas, yes! a whole world to remake, if she could see it: work for another than she! For all is wrong, and gone out of joint; the inward spiritual, and the outward economical; head or heart, there is no soundness in it. As indeed, evils of all sorts are more or less of kin, and do usually go together: especially it is an old truth, that wherever huge physical evil is, there, as the parent and origin of it, has moral evil to a proportionate extent been. Before those five-and-twenty labouring Millions, for instance, could get that haggardness of face, which old Mirabeau now looks on, in a Nation calling itself Christian, and calling man the brother of man,—what unspeakable, nigh infinite Dishonesty (of *seeming* and not *being*) in all manner of Rulers, and appointed Watchers, spiritual and temporal, must there not, through long ages, have gone on accumulating! It will accumulate: moreover, it will reach a head; for the first of all Gospels is this, that a Lie cannot endure for ever.

In fact, if we pierce through that rosepink vapour of Sentimentalism, Philanthropy, and Feasts of Morals, there lies behind it one of the sorriest spectacles. You might ask, What bonds that ever held a human society happily together, or held it together at all, are in force here? It is an unbelieving people; which has suppositions, hypotheses, and froth-systems of victorious Analysis; and for *belief* this mainly, that Pleasure is pleasant. Hunger they have for all sweet things;

and the law of Hunger: but what other law? Within them, or over them, properly none!

Their King has become a King Popinjay: with his Maurepas Government, gyrating as the weather-cock does, blown about by every wind. Above them they see no God; or they even do not look above, except with astronomical glasses. The Church indeed still is; but in the most submissive state; quite tamed by Philosophism; in a singularly short time; for the hour was come. Some twenty years ago, your Archbishop Beaumont would not even let the poor Jansenists get buried: your Loménie Brienne (a rising man, whom we shall meet with yet) could, in the name of the Clergy, insist on having the Antiprotestant Laws, which condemn to death for preaching, 'put in execution.'[1] And alas, now not so much as Baron Holbach's Atheism can be burnt,—except as pipe-matches by the private speculative individual. Our Church stands haltered, dumb, like a dumb ox; lowing only for provender (of tithes); content if it can have that; or, with dumb stupor, expecting its further doom. And the Twenty Millions of 'haggard faces'; and, as finger-post and guidance to them in their dark struggle, 'a gallows forty feet high'! Certainly a singular Golden Age; with its Feasts of Morals, its 'sweet manners,' its sweet institutions (*institutions douces*); betokening nothing but peace among men!—Peace? O Philosophe-Sentimentalism, what hast thou to do with peace, when thy mother's name is Jezebel? Foul Product of still fouler Corruption, thou with the corruption art doomed!

Meanwhile it is singular how long the rotten will hold together, provided you do not handle it roughly. For whole generations it continues standing, 'with a ghastly affectation of life,' after all life and truth has fled out of it: so loth are men to quit their old ways; and, conquering indolence and inertia, venture on new. Great truly is the Actual; is the Thing that has rescued itself from bottomless deeps of theory

[1] Boissy d'Anglas, *Vie de Malesherbes*, i. 15-22.

and possibility, and stands there as a definite indisputable Fact, whereby men do work and live, or once did so. Wisely shall men cleave to that, while it will endure; and quit it with regret, when it gives way under them. Rash enthusiast of Change, beware! Hast thou well considered all that Habit does in this life of ours; how all Knowledge and all Practice hang wondrous over infinite abysses of the Unknown, Impracticable; and our whole being is an infinite abyss, *overarched* by Habit, as by a thin Earth-rind, laboriously built together?

But if 'every man,' as it has been written, 'holds confined within him a *mad*-man,' what must every Society do;—Society, which in its commonest state is called 'the standing miracle of this world'! 'Without such Earth-rind of Habit,' continues our author, 'call it System of Habits, in a word, *fixed ways* of acting and of believing,—Society would not exist at all. With such it exists, better or worse. Herein too, in this its System of Habits, acquired, retained how you will, lies the true Law-Code and Constitution of a Society; the only Code, though an unwritten one, which it can in nowise *dis*obey. The thing we call written Code, Constitution, Form of Government, and the like, what is it but some miniature image, and solemnly expressed summary of this unwritten Code? *Is*,—or rather, alas, is *not*; but only should be, and always tends to be! In which latter discrepancy lies struggle without end.' And now, we add in the same dialect, let but, by ill chance, in such ever-enduring struggle,—your 'thin Earth-rind' be once *broken*! The fountains of the great deep boil forth; fire-fountains, enveloping, engulfing. Your 'Earth-rind' is shattered, swallowed up; instead of a green flowery world, there is a waste wild-weltering chaos;—which has again, with tumult and struggle, to *make* itself into a world.

On the other hand, be this conceded: Where thou findest a Lie that is oppressing thee, extinguish it. Lies exist there only to be extinguished; they wait and cry earnestly for extinction. Think well, meanwhile, in what spirit thou wilt do it: not with hatred, with headlong selfish violence; but in clearness of heart, with holy zeal, gently, almost with pity. Thou wouldst not *replace* such extinct Lie by a new Lie, which a new Injustice of thy own were; the parent of still other Lies? Whereby the latter end of that business were worse than the beginning.

So, however, in this world of ours, which has both an indestructible hope in the Future, and an indestructible tendency to persevere as in the Past, must Innovation and Conservation wage their perpetual conflict, as they may and can. Wherein the 'dæmonic element,' that lurks in all human things, *may* doubtless, some once in the thousand years,—get vent! But indeed may we not regret that such conflict,—which, after all, is but like that classical one of 'hate-filled Amazons with heroic Youths,' and will end in *embraces*,—should usually be so spasmodic? For Conservation, strengthened by that mightiest quality in us, our indolence, sits for long ages, not victorious only, which she should be; but tyrannical, incommunicative. She holds her adversary as if annihilated; such adversary lying, all the while, like some buried Enceladus; who, to gain the smallest freedom, has to stir a whole Trinacria with its Ætnas.

Wherefore, on the whole, we will honour a Paper Age too; an Era of Hope! For in this same frightful process of Enceladus Revolt; when the task, on which no mortal would willingly enter, has become imperative, inevitable,—is it not even a kindness of Nature that she lures us forward by cheerful promises, fallacious or not; and a whole generation plunges into the Erebus Blackness, lighted on by an Era of Hope? It has been well said: 'Man is based on Hope; he has properly no other possession but Hope; this habitation of his is named the Place of Hope.'

CHAPTER IV

MAUREPAS

But now, among French hopes, is not that of old M. de Maurepas one of the best-grounded; who hopes that he, by dexterity, shall contrive to continue Minister? Nimble old man, who for all emergencies has his light jest; and ever in the worst confusion will emerge, cork-like, unsunk! Small care to him is Perfectibility, Progress of the Species, and *Astræa Redux*: good only, that a man of light wit, verging towards fourscore, can in the seat of authority feel himself important among men. Shall we call him, as haughty Châteauroux was wont of old, '*M. Faquinet* (Diminutive of Scoundrel)'? In courtier dialect, he is now named 'the Nestor of France'; such governing Nestor as France has.

At bottom, nevertheless, it might puzzle one to say where the Government of France, in these days, specially is. In that Château of Versailles, we have Nestor, King, Queen, ministers and clerks, with paper-bundles tied in tape: but the Government? For Government is a thing that *governs*, that guides; and if need be, compels. Visible in France there is not such a thing. Invisible, inorganic, on the other hand, there is: in Philosophe saloons, in Œil-de-Bœuf galleries; in the tongue of the babbler, in the pen of the pamphleteer. Her Majesty appearing at the Opera is applauded; she returns all radiant with joy. Anon the applauses wax fainter, or threaten to cease; she is heavy of heart, the light of her face has fled. Is Sovereignty some poor Montgolfier; which, blown into by the popular wind, grows great and mounts; or sinks flaccid, if the wind be withdrawn? France was long a 'Despotism tempered by Epigrams'; and now, it would seem, the Epigrams have got the upper hand.

Happy were a young 'Louis the Desired' to make France happy; if it did not prove too troublesome, and he only knew the way. But there is endless discrepancy round him; so many claims and clamours; a mere confusion of tongues. Not reconcilable by man; not manageable, suppressible, save by some strongest and wisest man;—which only a lightly-jesting lightly-gyrating M. de Maurepas can so much as subsist amidst. Philosophism claims her new Era, meaning thereby innumerable things. And claims it in no faint voice; for France at large, hitherto mute, is now beginning to speak also; and speaks in that same sense. A huge, many-toned sound; distant, yet not unimpressive. On the other hand, the Œil-de-Bœuf, which, as nearest, one can hear best, claims with shrill vehemence that the Monarchy be as heretofore a Horn of Plenty; wherefrom loyal courtiers may draw,—to the just support of the throne. Let Liberalism and a New Era, if such is the wish, be introduced; only no curtailment of the royal moneys! Which latter condition, alas, is precisely the impossible one.

Philosophism, as we saw, has got her Turgot made Controller-General; and there shall be endless reformation. Unhappily this Turgot could continue only twenty months. With a miraculous *Fortunatus' Purse* in his Treasury, it might have lasted longer; with such Purse indeed, every French Controller-General, that would prosper in these days, ought first to provide himself. But here again may we not remark the bounty of Nature in regard to Hope? Man after man advances confident to the Augean Stable, as if *he* could clean it; expends his little fraction of an ability on it, with such cheerfulness; does, in so far as he was honest, accomplish something. Turgot has faculties; honesty, insight, heroic volition; but the Fortunatus' Purse he has not. Sanguine Controller-General! a whole pacific French Revolution may stand schemed in the head of the thinker; but who shall pay the unspeakable 'indemnities' that will be needed? Alas, far from that: on the very threshold of the business, he proposes that the Clergy, the Noblesse, the very Parlements be subjected to taxes like the People! One shriek of indignation and astonishment reverberates through all the Château galleries; M. de Maurepas has to gyrate: the poor King, who had written few weeks ago, '*Il n'y a que vous et moi qui aimions le peuple* (There is none but you and I that has the people's interest at heart),' must write now a dismissal;[1] and let the French Revolution accomplish itself, pacifically or not, as it can.

Hope, then, is deferred? Deferred; not destroyed, or abated. Is not this, for example, our Patriarch Voltaire, after long years of absence, revisiting Paris? With face shrivelled to nothing; with 'huge peruke *à la Louis Quatorze*, which leaves only two eyes visible, glittering like carbuncles,' the old man is here.[2] What an outburst! Sneering Paris has suddenly grown reverent; devotional with Hero-worship. Nobles have disguised themselves as tavern-waiters to obtain sight of him: the loveliest of France would lay their hair beneath his feet. 'His chariot is the nucleus of a Comet; whose train fills whole streets': they crown him in the theatre, with immortal vivats; finally 'stifle him under roses,'—for old Richelieu recommended opium in such state of the nerves, and the excessive Patriarch took too much. Her Majesty herself had some thought of sending for him; but was dissuaded. Let Majesty consider it, nevertheless. The purport of this man's existence has been to wither-up and annihilate all whereon Majesty and Worship for the present rests: and is it *so* that the world recognises him? With Apotheosis; as its Prophet and Speaker, who has spoken wisely the thing it longed to say? Add only, that the body of this same rose-stifled, beatified Patriarch cannot get buried except by stealth. It is wholly a notable business; and France, without doubt, is *big* (what the Germans call 'Of good Hope'): we shall wish her a happy birth-hour, and blessed fruit.

Beaumarchais too has now winded-up his Law-Pleadings

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[1] In May 1776.

[2] February 1778.

(*Mémoires*);[1] not without result, to himself and to the world. Caron Beaumarchais (or de Beaumarchais, for he got ennobled) had been born poor, but aspiring, esurient; with talents, audacity, adroitness; above all, with the talent for intrigue: a lean, but also a tough indomitable man. Fortune and dexterity brought him to the harpsichord of Mesdames, our good Princesses *Loque*, *Graille* and Sisterhood. Still better, Pâris Duvernier, the Court-Banker, honoured him with some confidence; to the length even of transactions in cash. Which confidence, however, Duvernier's Heir, a person of quality, would not continue. Quite otherwise; there springs a Lawsuit from it: wherein tough Beaumarchais, losing both money and repute, is, in the opinion of Judge-Reporter Goezman, of the Parlement Maupeou, and of a whole indifferent acquiescing world, miserably beaten. In all men's opinion, only not in his own! Inspired by the indignation, which makes, if not verses, satirical law-papers, the withered Music-master, with a desperate heroism, takes up his lost cause in spite of the world; fights for it, against Reporters, Parlements and Principalities, with light banter, with clear logic; adroitly, with an inexhaustible toughness and resource, like the skilfulest fencer; on whom, so skilful is he, the whole world now looks. Three long years it lasts; with wavering fortune. In fine, after labours comparable to the Twelve of Hercules, our unconquerable Caron triumphs; regains his Lawsuit and Lawsuits; strips Reporter Goezman of the judicial ermine; covering him with a perpetual garment of obloquy instead:—and in regard to the Parlement Maupeou (which he has helped to extinguish), to Parlements of all kinds, and to French Justice generally, gives rise to endless reflections in the minds of men. Thus has Beaumarchais, like a lean French Hercules, ventured down, driven by destiny, into the Nether Kingdoms; and victoriously tamed hell-dogs there. He also is henceforth among the notabilities of his generation.

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[1] 1773-6. See *Œuvres de Beaumarchais*; where they, and the history of them, are given.

CHAPTER V

ASTRÆA REDUX WITHOUT CASH

Observe, however, beyond the Atlantic, has not the new day verily dawned! Democracy, as we said, is born; storm-girt, is struggling for life and victory. A sympathetic France rejoices over the Rights of Man; in all saloons, it is said, What a spectacle! Now too behold our Deane, our Franklin, American Plenipotentiaries, here in person soliciting:[1] the sons of the Saxon Puritans, with their Old-Saxon temper, Old-Hebrew culture, sleek Silas, sleek Benjamin, here on such errand, among the light children of Heathenism, Monarchy, Sentimentalism, and the Scarlet-woman. A spectacle indeed; over which saloons may cackle joyous; though Kaiser Joseph, questioned on it, gave this answer, most unexpected from a Philosophe: "Madame, the trade I live by is that of royalist (*Mon métier à moi c'est d'être royaliste*)."

So thinks light Maurepas too; but the wind of Philosophism and force of public opinion will blow him round. Best wishes, meanwhile, are sent; clandestine privateers armed. Paul Jones shall equip his *Bon Homme Richard*: weapons, military stores can be smuggled over (if the English do not seize them); wherein, once more Beaumarchais, dimly as the Giant Smuggler, becomes visible,—filling his own lank pocket withal. But surely, in any case, France should have a Navy. For which great object were not now the time; now when that proud Termagant of the Seas has her hands full? It is true, an impoverished Treasury cannot build ships; but the hint once given (which Beaumarchais says *he* gave), this and the other loyal Seaport, Chamber of Commerce, will build and offer them. Goodly vessels bound into the waters; a *Ville de Paris*, Leviathan of ships.

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[1] 1777; Deane somewhat earlier: Franklin remained till 1785.

And now when gratuitous three-deckers dance there at anchor, with streamers flying; and eleutheromaniac Philosophedom grows ever more clamorous, what can a Maurepas do—but gyrate? Squadrons cross the ocean: Gateses, Lees, rough Yankee Generals, 'with woollen night-caps under their hats,' present arms to the far-glancing Chivalry of France; and new-born Democracy sees, not without amazement, 'Despotism tempered by Epigrams' fight at her side. So, however, it is. King's forces and heroic volunteers; Rochambeaus, Bouillés, Lameths, Lafayettes, have drawn their swords in this sacred quarrel of mankind;—shall draw them again elsewhere, in the strangest way.

Off Ushant some naval thunder is heard. In the course of which did our young Prince, Duke de Chartres, 'hide in the hold'; or did he materially, by *active* heroism, contribute to the victory? Alas, by a second edition, we learn that there was no victory; or that English Keppel had it.[1] Our poor young Prince gets his Opera plaudits changed into mocking tehees; and cannot become Grand-Admiral,—the source to him of woes which one may call endless.

Wo also for *Ville de Paris*, the Leviathan of ships! English Rodney has clutched it, and led it home, with the rest; so successful was his 'new manœuvre of breaking the enemy's line.'[2] It seems as if, according to Louis xv., 'France were never to have a Navy.' Brave Suffren must return from Hyder Ally and the Indian Waters; with small result; yet with great glory for 'six' *non-defeats*;—which indeed, with such seconding as he had, one may reckon heroic. Let the old sea-hero rest now, honoured of France, in his native Cevennes mountains; send smoke, not of gunpowder, but mere culinary smoke, through the old chimneys of the Castle of Jalès,—which one day, in other hands, shall have other fame. Brave Lapérouse shall by and by lift anchor, on philanthropic Voyage of Discovery; for the King knows Geography.[3] But, alas, this also will not prosper: the brave Navigator goes, and returns not; the Seekers search far seas for him in vain. He has vanished trackless into blue Immensity; and only some mournful mysterious shadow of him hovers long in all heads and hearts.

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[1] 27th July 1778.

[2] 9th and 12th April 1782.

[3] August 1st, 1785.

Neither, while the War yet lasts, will Gibraltar surrender. Not though Crillon, Nassau-Siegen, with the ablest projectors extant, are there; and Prince Condé and Prince d'Artois have hastened to help. Wondrous leather-roofed Floating-batteries, set afloat by French-Spanish *Pacte de Famille*, give gallant summons: to which, nevertheless, Gibraltar answers Plutonically, with mere torrents of redhot iron,—as if stone Calpe had become a throat of the Pit; and utters such a Doom's-blast of a *No*, as all men must credit.[1]

And so, with this loud explosion, the noise of War has ceased; an Age of Benevolence may hope, for ever. Our noble volunteers of Freedom have returned, to be her missionaries. Lafayette, as the matchless of his time, glitters in the Versailles Œil-de-Bœuf; has his Bust set up in the Paris Hôtel-de-Ville. Democracy stands inexpugnable, immeasurable, in her New World; has even a foot lifted towards the Old;—and our French Finances, little strengthened by such work, are in no healthy way.

What to do with the Finances? This indeed is the great question: a small but most black weather-symptom, which no radiance of universal hope can cover. We saw Turgot cast forth from the Controllership, with shrieks,—for want of a Fortunatus' Purse. As little could M. de Clugny manage the duty; or indeed do anything, but consume his wages; attain 'a place in History,' where as an ineffectual shadow thou beholdest him still lingering;—and let the duty manage itself. Did Genevese Necker *possess* such a Purse, then? He possessed banker's skill, banker's honesty; *credit* of all kinds, for he had written Academic Prize Essays, struggled for India Companies, given dinners to Philosophes, and 'realised a fortune in twenty years.' He possessed, further, a taciturnity and solemnity; of depth, or else of dulness. How singular for Celadon Gibbon, false swain as he had proved; whose father, keeping most probably his own gig, 'would not hear of such a union,'—to find now his forsaken Demoiselle Curchod sitting in the high places of the world, as Minister's Madame, and 'Necker not jealous!'[1]

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[1] *Annual Register* (Dodsley's), xxv. 258-267. September, October, 1782.

A new young Demoiselle, one day to be famed as a Madame and De Staël, was romping about the knees of the Decline and Fall: the lady Necker founds Hospitals; gives solemn Philosophe dinner-parties, to cheer her exhausted Controller-General. Strange things have happened: by clamour of Philosophism, management of Marquis de Pezay, and Poverty constraining even Kings. And so Necker, Atlas-like, sustains the burden of the Finances, for five years long.[2] Without wages, for he refused such; cheered only by Public Opinion, and the ministering of his noble Wife. With many thoughts in him, it is hoped;—which, however, he is shy of uttering. His *Compte Rendu*, published by the royal permission, fresh sign of a New Era, shows wonders;—which what but the genius of some Atlas-Necker can prevent from becoming portents? In Necker's head too there is a whole pacific French Revolution, of its kind; and in that taciturn dull depth, or deep dulness, ambition enough.

Meanwhile, alas, his Fortunatus' Purse turns out to be little other than the old '*vectigal* of Parsimony.' Nay, he too has to produce his scheme of taxing: Clergy, Noblesse to be taxed; Provincial Assemblies, and the rest,—like a mere Turgot! The expiring M. de Maurepas must gyrate one other time. Let Necker also depart; not unlamented.

Great in a private station, Necker looks on from the distance; abiding his time. 'Eighty thousand copies' of his new Book, which he calls *Administration des Finances*, will be sold in few days. He is gone; but shall return, and that more than once, borne by a whole shouting Nation. Singular

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[1] Gibbon's *Letters*: date, 16th June 1777, etc.

[2] Till May 1781.

Controller-General of the Finances; once Clerk in Thelusson's Bank!

CHAPTER VI

WINDBAGS

So marches the world, in this its Paper Age, or Era of Hope. Not without obstructions, war-explosions; which, however, heard from such distance, are little other than a cheerful marching-music. If indeed that dark living chaos of Ignorance and Hunger, five-and-twenty million strong, under your feet, were to begin playing!

For the present, however, consider Longchamp; now when Lent is ending, and the glory of Paris and France has gone forth, as in annual wont. Not to assist at *Tenebris* Masses, but to sun itself and show itself, and salute the young Spring.[1] Manifold, bright-tinted, glittering with gold; all through the Bois de Boulogne, in longdrawn variegated rows;—like longdrawn living flower-borders, tulips, dahlias, lilies of the valley; all in their moving flower-pots (of new-gilt carriages): pleasure of the eye, and pride of life! So rolls and dances the Procession: steady, of firm assurance, as if it rolled on adamant and the foundations of the world; not on mere heraldic parchment,—under which smoulders a lake of fire. Dance on, ye foolish ones; ye sought not wisdom, neither have ye found it. Ye and your fathers have sown the wind, ye shall reap the whirlwind. Was it not, from of old, written: *The wages of sin is death?*

But at Longchamp, as elsewhere, we remark for one thing, that dame and cavalier are waited on each by a kind of human familiar, named *jokei.* Little elf, or imp; though young, already withered; with its withered air of premature vice, of knowingness, of completed elf-hood: useful in various emergencies. The name *jokei* (jockey) comes from the

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[1] Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*, ii. 51. Louvet, *Roman de Faublas*, etc.

English; as the thing also fancies that it does. Our Anglomania, in fact, is grown considerable; prophetic of much. If France is to be free, why shall she not, now when mad war is hushed, love neighbouring Freedom? Cultivated men, your Dukes de Liancourt, de la Rochefoucault admire the English Constitution, the English National Character; would import what of it they can.

Of what is lighter, especially if it be light as wind, how much easier the freightage! Non-Admiral Duke de Chartres (not yet d'Orléans or Egalité) flies to and fro across the Strait; importing English Fashions: this he, as hand-and-glove with an English Prince of Wales, is surely qualified to do. Carriages and saddles; top-boots and *rédingotes*, as we call riding-coats. Nay the very mode of riding: for now no man on a level with his age but will trot *à l'Anglaise*, rising in the stirrups; scornful of the old sitfast method, in which, according to Shakspeare, 'butter and eggs' go to market. Also, he can urge the fervid wheels, this brave Chartres of ours; no whip in Paris is rasher and surer than the unprofessional one of Monseigneur.

Elf *jokeis*, we have seen; but see now real Yorkshire jockeys, and what they ride on, and train: English racers for French Races. These likewise we owe first (under the Providence of the Devil) to Monseigneur. Prince d'Artois also has his stud of racers. Prince d'Artois has withal the strangest horseleech: a moonstruck, much-enduring individual, of Neuchâtel in Switzerland,—named *Jean Paul Marat*. A problematic Chevalier d'Eon, now in petticoats, now in breeches, is no less problematic in London than in Paris; and causes bets and lawsuits. Beautiful days of international communion! Swindlery and Blackguardism have stretched hands across the Channel, and saluted mutually: on the racecourse of Vincennes or Sablons, behold, in English curricle-and-four, wafted glorious among the principalities and rascalities, an English Dr. Dodd,[1]—for whom also the too early gallows gapes.

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[1] Adelung, *Geschichte der menschlichen Narrheit*, § Dodd.

Duke de Chartres was a young Prince of great promise, as young princes often are; which promise unfortunately has belied itself. With the huge Orléans Property, with Duke de Penthièvre for Father-in-law (and now the young Brother-in-law Lamballe killed by excesses),—he will one day be the richest man in France. Meanwhile, 'his hair is all falling out, his blood is quite spoiled,'—by early transcendentalism of debauchery. Carbuncles stud his face; dark studs on a ground of burnished copper. A most signal failure, this young Prince! The stuff prematurely burnt out of him: little left but foul smoke and ashes of expiring sensualities: what might have been Thought, Insight, and even Conduct, gone now, or fast going,—to confused darkness, broken by bewildering dazzlements; to obstreperous crotchets; to activities which you may call semi-delirious, or even semi-galvanic! Paris affects to laugh at his charioteering; but he heeds not such laughter.

On the other hand, what a day, not of laughter, was that, when he threatened, for lucre's sake, to lay sacrilegious hand on the Palais-Royal Garden![1] The flower-parterres shall be riven up; the Chestnut Avenues shall fall: time-honoured boscages, under which the Opera Hamadryads were wont to wander, not inexorable to men. Paris moans aloud. Philidor, from his Café de la Régence, shall no longer look on greenness; the loungers and losels of the world, where now shall they haunt? In vain is moaning. The axe glitters; the sacred groves fall crashing,—for indeed Monseigneur was short of money: the Opera Hamadryads fly with shrieks. Shriek not, ye Opera Hamadryads; or not as those that have no comfort. He will surround your Garden with new edifices and piazzas: though narrowed, it shall be replanted; dizened with hydraulic jets, cannon which the sun fires at noon; things bodily, things spiritual, such as man has not imagined;—and in the Palais-Royal shall again, and more than ever, be the *Sorcerer's Sabbath* and *Satan-at-Home* of our Planet.

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[1] 1781-82. (Dulaure, viii. 423.)

What will not mortals attempt? From remote Annonay in the Vivarais, the Brothers Montgolfier send up their paper-dome, filled with the smoke of burnt wool.[1] The Vivarais Provincial Assembly is to be prorogued this same day: Vivarais Assembly-members applaud, and the shouts of congregated men. Will victorious Analysis scale the very Heavens, then?

Paris hears with eager wonder; Paris shall ere long see. From Réveillon's Paper-warehouse there, in the Rue St. Antoine (a noted Warehouse),—the new Montgolfier air-ship launches itself. Ducks and poultry have been borne skyward: but now shall men be borne.[2] Nay, Chemist Charles thinks of hydrogen and glazed silk. Chemist Charles will himself ascend, from the Tuileries Garden; Montgolfier solemnly cutting the cord. By Heaven, this Charles does also mount, he and another! Ten times ten thousand hearts go palpitating; all tongues are mute with wonder and fear;—till a shout, like the voice of seas, rolls after him, on his wild way. He soars, he dwindles upwards; has become a mere gleaming circlet,—like some Turgotine snuffbox, what we call '*Turgotine-Platitude*'; like some new daylight Moon! Finally he descends; welcomed by the universe. Duchess Polignac, with a party, is in the Bois de Boulogne, waiting; though it is drizzly winter, the 1st of December 1783. The whole chivalry of France, Duke de Chartres foremost, gallops to receive him.[3]

Beautiful invention; mounting heavenward, so beautifully,—so unguidably! Emblem of much, and of our Age of Hope itself; which shall mount, specifically-light, majestically in this same manner; and hover,—tumbling whither Fate will. Well if it do not, Pilâtre-like, explode; and *de*mount all the more tragically!—So, riding on windbags, will men scale the Empyrean.

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[1] 5th June 1783.

[2] October and November 1783.

[3] Lacretelle, 18^{me} *Siècle*, iii. 258.

Or observe Herr Doctor Mesmer, in his spacious Magnetic Halls. Long-stoled he walks; reverend, glancing upwards, as in rapt commerce; an Antique Egyptian Hierophant in this new age. Soft music flits; breaking fitfully the sacred stillness. Round their Magnetic Mystery, which to the eye is mere tubs with water,—sit breathless, rod in hand, the circles of Beauty and Fashion, each circle a living circular *Passion-Flower*: expecting the magnetic afflatus, and new-manufactured Heaven-on-Earth. O women, O men, great is your infidel-faith! A Parlementary Duport, a Bergasse, D'Espréménil we notice there; Chemist Berthollet too,—on the part of Monseigneur de Chartres.

Had not the Academy of Sciences, with its Baillys, Franklins, Lavoisiers, interfered! But it did interfere.[1] Mesmer may pocket his hard money, and withdraw. Let him walk silent by the shore of the Bodensee, by the ancient town of Constance; meditating on much. For so, under the strangest new vesture, the old great truth (since no vesture can hide it) begins again to be revealed: That man is what we call a miraculous creature, with miraculous power over men; and, on the whole, with such a Life in him, and such a World round him, as victorious Analysis, with her Physiologies, Nervous-systems, Physic and Metaphysic, will never completely *name*, to say nothing of explaining. Wherein also the Quack shall, in all ages, come in for his share.

CHAPTER VII

CONTRAT SOCIAL

In such succession of singular prismatic tints, flush after flush suffusing our horizon, does the Era of Hope dawn on towards fulfilment. Questionable! As indeed, with an Era of Hope that rests on mere universal Benevolence, victorious

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[1] August 1784.

Analysis, Vice cured of its deformity; and, in the longrun, on Twenty-five dark savage Millions, looking up, in hunger and weariness, to that *Ecce-signum* of theirs 'forty feet high,'—how could it but be questionable?

Through all time, if we read aright, sin was, is, will be, the parent of misery. This land calls itself most Christian, and has crosses and cathedrals; but its High-priest is some Roche-Aymon, some Necklace-Cardinal Louis de Rohan. The voice of the poor, through long years, ascends inarticulate, in *Jacqueries*, meal-mobs; low-whimpering of infinite moan: unheeded of the Earth; not unheeded of Heaven. Always moreover where the Millions are wretched, there are the Thousands straitened, unhappy; only the Units can flourish; or say rather, be ruined the last. Industry, all noosed and haltered, as if it too were some beast of chase for the mighty hunters of this world to bait, and cut slices from,—cries passionately to these its well-paid guides and watchers, not, *Guide me*; but, *Laissez faire*, Leave me alone of *your* guidance! What market has Industry in this France? For two things there may be market and demand: for the coarser kind of field-fruits, since the Millions will live: for the finer kinds of luxury and spicery,—of multiform taste, from opera-melodies down to racers and courtesans; since the Units will be amused. It is at bottom but a mad state of things.

To mend and remake all which we have, indeed, victorious Analysis. Honour to victorious Analysis; nevertheless, out of the Workshop and Laboratory, what thing was victorious Analysis yet known to make? Detection of incoherences, mainly; destruction of the incoherent. From of old, Doubt was but half a magician; she evokes the spectres which she cannot quell. We shall have 'endless vortices of froth-logic'; whereon first words, and then things, are whirled and swallowed. Remark, accordingly, as acknowledged grounds of Hope, at bottom mere precursors of Despair, this perpetual theorising about Man, the Mind of Man, Philosophy of Government, Progress of the Species and such-like; the main thinking furniture of every head. Time, and so many Montesquieus, Mablys, spokesmen of Time, have discovered innumerable things: and now has not Jean Jacques promulgated his new Evangel of a *Contrat Social*; explaining the whole mystery of Government, and how it is *contracted* and bargained for,—to universal satisfaction? Theories of Government! Such have been, and will be; in ages of decadence. Acknowledge them in their degree; as processes of Nature, who does nothing in vain; as steps in her great process. Meanwhile, what theory is so certain as this, That all theories, were they never so earnest, painfully elaborated, are, and, by the very conditions of them, must be incomplete, questionable, and even false? Thou shalt know that this Universe is, what it professes to be, an *infinite* one. Attempt not to swallow *it*, for thy logical digestion; be thankful, if skilfully planting down this and the other fixed pillar in the chaos, thou prevent its swallowing *thee*. That a new young generation has exchanged the Sceptic Creed, *What shall I believe?* for passionate Faith in this Gospel according to Jean Jacques is a further step in the business; and betokens much.

Blessed also is Hope; and always from the beginning there was some Millennium prophesied; Millennium of Holiness; but (what is notable) never till this new Era, any Millennium of mere Ease and plentiful Supply. In such prophesied Lubberland, of Happiness, Benevolence, and Vice cured of its deformity, trust not, my friends! Man is not what one calls a happy animal; his appetite for sweet victual is so enormous. How, in this wild Universe, which storms in on him, infinite, vague-menacing, shall poor man find, say not happiness, but existence, and footing to stand on, if it be not by girding himself together for continual endeavour and endurance? Wo, if in his heart there dwelt no devout Faith; if the word Duty had lost its meaning for him! For as to this of Sentimentalism, so useful for weeping with over romances and on pathetic occasions, it otherwise verily will avail nothing; nay less. The healthy heart that said to itself, 'How healthy am I!' was already fallen into the fatalest sort of disease. Is not Sentimentalism twin-sister to Cant, if not one and the same with it? Is not Cant the *materia prima* of the Devil; from which all falsehoods, imbecilities, abominations body themselves; from which no true thing *can* come? For Cant is itself properly a double-distilled Lie; the second-power of a Lie.

And now if a whole Nation fall into that? In such case, I answer, infallibly they will return out of it! For life is no cunningly-devised deception or self-deception: it is a great truth that thou art alive, that thou hast desires, necessities; neither can these subsist and satisfy themselves on delusions, but on fact. To fact, depend on it, we shall come back: to such fact, blessed or cursed, as we have wisdom for. The lowest, least blessed fact one knows of, on which necessitous mortals have ever based themselves, seems to be the primitive one of Cannibalism: That *I* can devour *Thee*. What if such Primitive Fact were precisely the one we had (with our improved methods) to revert to, and begin anew from!

CHAPTER VIII

PRINTED PAPER

In such a practical France, let the theory of Perfectibility say what it will, discontents cannot be wanting: your promised Reformation is so indispensable; yet it comes not; who will begin it—with himself? Discontent with what is around us, still more with what is above us, goes on increasing; seeking ever new vents.

Of Street Ballads, of Epigrams that from of old tempered Despotism, we need not speak. Nor of Manuscript Newspapers (*Nouvelles à la main*) do we speak. Bachaumont and his journeymen and followers may close those 'thirty volumes of scurrilous eaves-dropping,' and quit that trade; for at length if not liberty of the Press, there is licence. Pamphlets can be surreptitiously vended and read in Paris, did they even bear to be 'Printed at Pekin.' We have a *Courrier de l'Europe* in those years, regularly published at London; by a De Morande, whom the guillotine has not yet devoured. There too an unruly Linguet, still unguillotined, when his own country has become too hot for him, and his brother Advocates have cast him out, can emit his hoarse wailings, and *Bastille Dévoilée* (Bastille Unveiled). Loquacious Abbé Raynal, at length, has his wish; sees the *Histoire Philosophique*, with its 'lubricity,' unveracity, loose loud eleutheromaniac rant (contributed, they say, by Philosophedom at large, though in the Abbé's name, and to his glory), burnt by the common hangman;—and sets out on his travels as a martyr. It was the Edition of 1781; perhaps the last notable Book that had such fire-beatitude,—the hangman discovering now that it did not serve.

Again, in Courts of Law, with their money-quarrels, divorce-cases, wheresoever a glimpse into the household existence can be had, what indications! The Parlements of Besançon and Aix ring, audible to all France, with the amours and destinies of a young Mirabeau. He, under the nurture of a 'Friend of Men,' has, in State Prisons, in marching Regiments, Dutch Authors'-garrets, and quite other scenes, 'been for twenty years learning to resist despotism': despotism of men, and alas also of gods. How, beneath this rose-coloured veil of Universal Benevolence and *Astræa Redux*, is the sanctuary of Home so often a dreary void, or a dark contentious Hell-on-Earth! The old Friend of Men has his own divorce-case too; and at times, 'his whole family but one' under lock and key: he writes much about reforming and enfranchising the world; and for his own private behoof he has needed sixty *Lettres-de-Cachet*. A man of insight too; with resolution, even with manful principle: but in such an element, inward and outward; which he could not rule, but only madden. Edacity, rapacity;—quite contrary to the finer sensibilities of the heart! Fools, that expect your verdant Millennium, and nothing but Love and Abundance, brooks running wine, winds whispering music,—with the whole ground and basis of your existence champed into a mud of Sensuality; which, daily growing deeper, will soon have no bottom but the Abyss!

Or consider that unutterable business of the Diamond Necklace. Red-hatted Cardinal Louis de Rohan; Sicilian jail-bird Balsamo Cagliostro; milliner Dame de Lamotte, 'with a face of some piquancy': the highest Church Dignitaries waltzing, in Walpurgis Dance, with quack-prophets, pickpurses and public women;—a whole Satan's Invisible World displayed; working there continually under the daylight visible one; the smoke of its torment going up for ever! The Throne has been brought into scandalous collision with the Treadmill. Astonished Europe rings with the mystery for nine months; sees only lie unfold itself from lie; corruption among the lofty and the low, gulosity, credulity, imbecility, strength nowhere but in the hunger. Weep, fair Queen, thy first tears of unmixed wretchedness! Thy fair name has been tarnished by foul breath; irremediably while life lasts. No more shalt thou be loved and pitied by living hearts, till a new generation has been born, and thy own heart lies cold, cured of all its sorrows.—The Epigrams henceforth become, not sharp and bitter; but cruel, atrocious, unmentionable. On that 31st of May 1786, a miserable Cardinal Grand-Almoner Rohan, on issuing from his Bastille, is escorted by hurrahing crowds: unloved he, and worthy of no love; but important since the Court and Queen are his enemies.[1]

How is our bright Era of Hope dimmed; and the whole sky growing bleak with signs of hurricane and earthquake! It is a doomed world: gone all 'obedience that made men free';

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[1] Fils Adoptif, *Mémoires de Mirabeau*, iv. 325.—See Carlyle's *Biographical Essays*, § Diamond Necklace, § Count Cagliostro.

fast going the obedience that made men slaves,—at least to one another. Slaves only of their own lusts they now are, and will be. Slaves of sin; inevitably also of sorrow. Behold the mouldering mass of Sensuality and Falsehood; round which plays foolishly, itself a corrupt phosphorescence, some glimmer of Sentimentalism;—and over all, rising, as Ark of *their* Covenant, the grim Patibulary Fork 'forty feet high'; which also is now nigh rotted. Add only that the French Nation distinguishes itself among Nations by the characteristic of Excitability; with the good, but also with the perilous evil, which belongs to that. Rebellion, explosion, of unknown extent is to be calculated on. There are, as Chesterfield wrote, 'all the symptoms I have ever met with in History!'

Shall we say, then: Wo to Philosophism, that it destroyed Religion, what it called 'extinguishing the abomination (*écraser l'infâme*)'? Wo rather to those that made the Holy an abomination, and extinguishable; wo to all men that live in such a time of world-abomination and world-destruction! Nay, answer the Courtiers, it was Turgot, it was Necker, with their mad innovating; it was the Queen's want of etiquette; it was he, it was she, it was that. Friends! it was every scoundrel that had lived, and quack-like pretended to be doing, and been only eating and *mis*doing, in all provinces of life, as Shoeblack or as Sovereign Lord, each in his degree, from the time of Charlemagne and earlier. All this (for be sure no falsehood perishes, but is as seed sown out to grow) has been storing itself for thousands of years; and now the account-day has come. And rude will the settlement be: of wrath laid up against the day of wrath. O my Brother, be not thou a Quack! Die rather, if thou wilt take counsel; 'tis but dying once, and thou art quit of it for ever. Cursed is that trade; and bears curses, thou knowest not how, long ages after thou art departed, and the wages thou hadst are all consumed; nay, as the ancient wise have written,—through Eternity itself, and is verily marked in the Doom-Book of a God!

Hope deferred maketh the heart sick. And yet, as we said, Hope is but deferred; not abolished, not abolishable. It is very notable, and touching, how this same Hope does still light onwards the French Nation through all its wild destinies. For we shall still find Hope shining, be it for fond invitation, be it for anger and menace; as a mild heavenly light it shone; as a red conflagration it shines: burning sulphurous-blue, through darkest regions of Terror, it still shines; and goes not out at all, since Desperation itself is a kind of Hope. Thus is our Era still to be named of Hope, though in the saddest sense,—when there is nothing left but Hope.

But if any one would know summarily what a Pandora's Box lies there for the opening, he may see it in what by its nature is the symptom of all symptoms, the surviving Literature of the Period. Abbé Raynal, with his lubricity and loud loose rant, has spoken *his* word; and already the fast-hastening generation responds to another. Glance at Beaumarchais' *Mariage de Figaro*; which now (in 1784), after difficulty enough, has issued on the stage; and 'runs its hundred nights,' to the admiration of all men. By what virtue or internal vigour it so ran, the reader of our day will rather wonder:—and indeed will know so much the better that it flattered some pruriency of the time; that it spoke what all were feeling, and longing to speak. Small substance in that *Figaro*: thin wiredrawn intrigues, thin wiredrawn sentiments and sarcasms; a thing lean, barren; yet which winds and whisks itself, as through a wholly mad universe, adroitly, with a high-sniffing air: wherein each, as was hinted, which is the grand secret, may see some image of himself, and of his own state and ways. So it runs its hundred nights, and all France runs with it; laughing applause. If the soliloquising Barber ask: 'What has your Lordship done to earn all this?' and can only answer: 'You took the trouble to be born (*Vous vous êtes donné la peine de naître*),' all men must laugh: and a gay horse-racing Anglomaniac Noblesse loudest of all. For how can small books have a great danger in them? asks the Sieur Caron; and fancies his thin epigram may be a kind of reason. Conqueror of a golden fleece, by giant smuggling; tamer of hell-dogs, in the Parlement Maupeou; and finally crowned Orpheus in the *Théâtre Français*, Beaumarchais has now culminated, and unites the attributes of several demigods. We shall meet him once again, in the course of his decline.

Still more significant are two Books produced on the eve of the ever-memorable Explosion itself, and read eagerly by all the world: Saint-Pierre's *Paul et Virginie*, and Louvet's *Chevalier de Faublas.* Noteworthy Books; which may be considered as the last-speech of old Feudal France. In the first there rises melodiously, as it were, the wail of a moribund world: everywhere wholesome Nature in unequal conflict with diseased perfidious Art; cannot escape from it in the lowest hut, in the remotest island of the sea. Ruin and death must strike down the loved one; and, what is most significant of all, death even here not by necessity but by etiquette. What a world of prurient corruption lies visible in that super-sublime of modesty! Yet, on the whole, our good Saint-Pierre is musical, poetical though most morbid: we will call his Book the swan-song of old dying France.

Louvet's, again, let no man account musical. Truly, if this wretched *Faublas* is a death-speech, it is one under the gallows, and by a felon that does not repent. Wretched *cloaca* of a Book; without depth even as a *cloaca*! What 'picture of French society' is here? Picture properly of nothing, if not of the mind that gave it out as some sort of picture. Yet symptom of much; above all, of the world that could nourish itself thereon.

BOOK THIRD

THE PARLEMENT OF PARIS

CHAPTER I

DISHONOURED BILLS

While the unspeakable confusion is everywhere weltering within, and through so many cracks in the surface sulphur-smoke is issuing, the question arises: Through what crevice will the main Explosion carry itself? Through which of the old craters or chimneys; or must it, at once, form a new crater for itself? In every Society are such chimneys, are Institutions serving as such: even Constantinople is not without its safety-valves; there too Discontent can vent itself,—in material fire; by the number of nocturnal conflagrations, or of hanged bakers, the Reigning Power can read the signs of the times, and change course according to these.

We may say that this French Explosion will doubtless first try all the old Institutions of escape; for by each of these there is, or at least there used to be, some communication with the interior deep; they are national Institutions in virtue of that. Had they even become personal Institutions, and what we can call choked up from their original uses, there nevertheless must the impediment be weaker than elsewhere. Through which of them, then? An observer might have guessed: Through the Law Parlements; above all, through the Parlement of Paris.

Men, though never so thickly clad in dignities, sit not inaccessible to the influences of their time; especially men whose life is business; who at all turns, were it even from behind judgment-seats, have come in contact with the actual workings of the world. The Counsellor of Parlement, the President himself, who has bought his place with hard money that he might be looked up to by his fellow-creatures, how shall he, in all Philosophe-soirées, and saloons of elegant culture, become notable as a Friend of Darkness? Among the Paris Long-robes there may be more than one patriotic Malesherbes, whose rule is conscience and the public good; there are clearly more than one hotheaded D'Espréménil, to whose confused thought any loud reputation of the Brutus sort may seem glorious. The Lepelletiers, Lamoignons have titles and wealth; yet, at Court, are only styled 'Noblesse of the Robe.' There are Duports of deep scheme; Fréteaus, Sabatiers, of incontinent tongue: all nursed more or less on the milk of the *Contrat Social.* Nay, for the whole Body, is not this patriotic opposition also a fighting for oneself? Awake, Parlement of Paris, renew thy long warfare! Was not the Parlement Maupeou abolished with ignominy? Not now hast thou to dread a Louis XIV., with the crack of his whip, and his Olympian looks; not now a Richelieu and Bastilles: no, the whole Nation is behind thee. Thou too (O heavens!) mayest become a Political Power; and with the shakings of thy horse-hair wig shake principalities and dynasties, like a very Jove with his ambrosial curls!

Light old M. de Maurepas, since the end of 1781, has been fixed in the frost of death: 'Never more,' said the good Louis, 'shall I hear his step in the room there overhead'; his light jestings and gyratings are at an end. No more can the importunate reality be hidden by pleasant wit, and today's evil be deftly rolled over upon tomorrow. The morrow itself has arrived; and now nothing but a solid phlegmatic M. de Vergennes sits there, in dull matter of fact, like some dull punctual Clerk (which he originally was); admits what cannot be denied, let the remedy come whence it will.

In him is no remedy; only clerklike 'despatch of business' according to routine. The poor King, grown older yet hardly more experienced, must himself, with such no-faculty as he has, begin governing; wherein also his Queen will give help. Bright Queen, with her quick clear glances and impulses; clear, and even noble; but all too superficial, vehement-shallow, for that work! To govern France were such a problem; and now it has grown well-nigh too hard to govern even the Œil-de-Bœuf. For if a distressed People has its cry, so likewise, and more audibly, has a bereaved Court. To the Œil-de-Bœuf it remains inconceivable how, in a France of such resources, the Horn of Plenty should run dry: did it not *use* to flow? Nevertheless Necker, with his revenue of parsimony, has 'suppressed above six hundred places,' before the Courtiers could oust him; parsimonious finance-pedant as he was. Again, a military pedant, Saint-Germain, with his Prussian manœuvres; with his Prussian notions, as if merit and not coat-of-arms should be the rule of promotion, has disaffected military men; the Mousquetaires, with much else are suppressed: for he too was one of your suppressors; and unsettling and oversetting, did mere mischief—to the Œil-de-Bœuf. Complaints abound; scarcity, anxiety: it is a changed Œil-de-Bœuf. Besenval says, already in these years (1781) there was such a melancholy (such a *tristesse*) about Court, compared with former days, as made it quite dispiriting to look upon.

No wonder that the Œil-de-Bœuf feels melancholy, when you are suppressing its places! Not a place can be suppressed but some purse is the lighter for it; and more than one heart the heavier; for did it not employ the working-classes too,—manufacturers, male and female, of laces, essences; of Pleasure generally, whosoever could manufacture Pleasure? Miserable economies; never felt over Twenty-five Millions! So, however, it goes on: and is not yet ended. Few years more and the Wolf-hounds shall fall suppressed, the Bear-hounds, the Falconry; places shall fall, thick as autumnal leaves. Duke de Polignac demonstrates, to the complete silencing of ministerial logic, that his place cannot be abolished; then gallantly, turning to the Queen, surrenders it, since her Majesty so wishes. Less chivalrous was Duke de Coigny, and yet not luckier: 'We got into a real quarrel, Coigny and I,' said King Louis; 'but if he had even struck me, I could not have blamed him.'[1] In regard to such matters there can be but one opinion. Baron Besenval, with that frankness of speech which stamps the independent man, plainly assures her Majesty that it is frightful (*affreux*); 'you go to bed, and are not sure but you shall rise impoverished on the morrow: one might as well be in Turkey.' It is indeed a dog's life.

How singular this perpetual distress of the royal treasury! And yet it is a thing not more incredible than undeniable. A thing mournfully true: the stumbling-block on which all Ministers successively stumble, and fall. Be it 'want of fiscal genius,' or some far other want, there is the palpablest discrepancy between Revenue and Expenditure; a *Deficit* of the Revenue: you must 'choke (*combler*) the Deficit,' or else it will swallow you! This is the stern problem; hopeless seemingly as squaring of the circle. Controller Joly de Fleury, who succeeded Necker, could do nothing with it; nothing but propose loans, which were tardily filled up; impose new taxes, unproductive of money, productive of clamour and discontent. As little could Controller d'Ormesson do, or even less; for if Joly maintained himself beyond year and day, D'Ormesson reckons only by months: till 'the King purchased Rambouillet without consulting him,' which he took as a hint to withdraw. And so, towards the end of 1783, matters threaten to come to a stillstand. Vain seems human ingenuity. In vain has our newly-devised 'Council of Finances' struggled, our Intendants of Finance, Controller-General of Finances: there are unhappily no Finances to control. Fatal paralysis invades the social movement; clouds, of blindness or of blackness, envelop us: are we breaking down, then, into the black horrors of NATIONAL BANKRUPTCY?

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[1] Besenval, iii. 255-58.

Great is Bankruptcy: the great bottomless gulf into which all Falsehoods, public and private, do sink, disappearing; whither, from the first origin of them, they were all doomed. For Nature is true and not a lie. No lie you can speak or act but it will come, after longer or shorter circulation, like a Bill drawn on Nature's Reality, and be presented there for payment,—with the answer, *No effects.* Pity only that it often had so long a circulation: that the original forger were so seldom he who bore the final smart of it! Lies, and the burden of evil they bring, are passed on; shifted from back to back, and from rank to rank; and so land ultimately on the dumb lowest rank, who with spade and mattock, with sore heart and empty wallet, daily come in *contact* with reality, and can pass the cheat no further.

Observe nevertheless how, by a just compensating law, if the lie with its burden (in this confused whirlpool of Society) sinks and is shifted ever downwards, then in return the distress of it rises ever upwards and upwards. Whereby, after the long pining and demi-starvation of those Twenty Millions, a Duke de Coigny and his Majesty come also to have their 'real quarrel.' Such is the law of just Nature; bringing, though at long intervals, and were it only by Bankruptcy, matters round again to the mark.

But with a Fortunatus' Purse in his pocket, through what length of time might not almost any Falsehood last! Your Society, your Household, practical or spiritual Arrangement, is untrue, unjust, offensive to the eye of God and man. Nevertheless its hearth is warm, its larder well replenished: the innumerable Swiss of Heaven, with a kind of natural loyalty, gather round it; will prove, by pamphleteering, musketeering, that it is a truth; or if not an unmixed (unearthly, impossible) Truth, then better, a wholesomely attempered one (as wind is to the shorn lamb), and works well. Changed outlook, however, when purse and larder grow empty! Was your Arrangement so true, so accordant to Nature's ways, then how, in the name of wonder, has

Nature, with her infinite bounty, come to leave it famishing there? To all men, to all women and all children, it is now indubitable that your Arrangement was *false*. Honour to Bankruptcy; ever righteous on the great scale, though in detail it is so cruel! Under all Falsehoods it works, unweariedly mining. No Falsehood, did it rise heaven-high and cover the world, but Bankruptcy, one day, will sweep it down, and make us free of it.

CHAPTER II

CONTROLLER CALONNE

UNDER such circumstances of *tristesse*, obstruction and sick languor, when to an exasperated Court it seems as if fiscal genius had departed from among men, what apparition could be welcomer than that of M. de Calonne? Calonne, a man of indisputable genius; even fiscal genius, more or less; of experience both in managing Finance and Parlements, for he has been Intendant at Metz, at Lille; King's Procureur at Douai. A man of weight, connected with the moneyed classes; of unstained name,—if it were not some peccadillo (of showing a Client's Letter) in that old D'Aiguillon-Lachalotais business, as good as forgotten now. He has kinsmen of heavy purse, felt on the Stock Exchange. Our Foulons, Berthiers intrigue for him:—old Foulon, who has now nothing to do but intrigue; who is known and even seen to be what they call a scoundrel; but of unmeasured wealth; who, from Commissariat-clerk which he once was, may hope, some think, if the game go right, to be Minister himself one day.

Such propping and backing has M. de Calonne; and then intrinsically such qualities! Hope radiates from his face; persuasion hangs on his tongue. For all straits he has present remedy, and will make the world roll on wheels before him. On the 3d of November 1783, the Œil-de-Bœuf rejoices in its new Controller-General. Calonne also shall have trial; Calonne also, in his way, as Turgot and Necker had done in theirs, shall forward the consummation; suffuse, with one other flush of brilliancy, our now too leaden-coloured Era of Hope, and wind it up—into fulfilment.

Great, in any case, is the felicity of the Œil-de-Bœuf. Stinginess has fled from these royal abodes: suppression ceases; your Besenval may go peaceably to sleep, sure that he shall awake unplundered. Smiling Plenty, as if conjured by some enchanter, has returned; scatters contentment from her new-flowing horn. And mark what suavity of manners! A bland smile distinguishes our Controller: to all men he listens with an air of interest, nay of anticipation; makes their own wish clear to themselves, and grants it; or at least, grants conditional promise of it. 'I fear this is a matter of difficulty,' said her Majesty.—'Madame,' answered the Controller, 'if it is but difficult, it is done; if it is impossible, it shall be done (*se fera*).' A man of such 'facility' withal. To observe him in the pleasure-vortex of society, which none partakes of with more gusto, you might ask, When does he work? And yet his work, as we see, is never behindhand; above all, the fruit of his work: ready-money. Truly a man of incredible facility; facile action, facile elocution, facile thought: how, in mild suasion, philosophic depth sparkles up from him, as mere wit and lambent sprightliness; and in her Majesty's Soirées, with the weight of a world lying on him, he is the delight of men and women! By what magic does he accomplish miracles? By the only true magic, that of genius. Men name him '*the* Minister'; as indeed, when was there another such? Crooked things are become straight by him, rough places plain; and over the Œil-de-Bœuf there rests an unspeakable sunshine.

Nay, in seriousness, let no man say that Calonne had not genius: genius for Persuading; before all things, for Borrowing. With the skilfulest judicious appliances of underhand money, he keeps the Stock-Exchanges flourishing; so that Loan after Loan is filled up as soon as opened. 'Calculators likely to know'[1] have calculated that he spent, in extraordinaries, 'at the rate of one million daily'; which indeed is some fifty thousand pounds sterling: but did he not procure something with it; namely peace and prosperity, for the time being? Philosophedom grumbles and croaks; buys, as we said, 80,000 copies of Necker's new Book: but Nonpareil Calonne, in her Majesty's Apartment, with the glittering retinue of Dukes, Duchesses, and mere happy admiring faces, can let Necker and Philosophedom croak.

V The misery is, such a time cannot last! Squandering, and Payment by Loan is no way to choke a Deficit. Neither is oil the substance for quenching conflagrations;—alas no, only for assuaging them, *not* permanently! To the Nonpareil himself, who wanted not insight, it is clear at intervals, and dimly certain at all times, that his trade is by nature temporary, growing daily more difficult; that changes incalculable lie at no great distance. Apart from financial Deficit, the world is wholly in such a newfangled humour; all things working loose from their old fastenings, towards new issues and combinations. There is not a dwarf *jokei*, a cropt Brutus'-head, or Anglomaniac horseman rising on his stirrups, that does not betoken change. But what then? The day, in any case, passes pleasantly; for the morrow, if the morrow come, there shall be counsel too. Once mounted (by munificence, suasion, magic of genius) high enough in favour with the Œil-de-Bœuf, with the King, Queen, Stock-Exchange, and so far as possible with all men, a Nonpareil Controller may hope to go careering through the Inevitable, in some unimagined way, as handsomely as another.

< At all events, for these three miraculous years, it has been expedient heaped on expedient: till now, with such cumulation

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[1] Besenval, iii. 216.

and height, the pile topples perilous. And here has this world's-wonder of a Diamond Necklace brought it at last to the clear verge of tumbling. Genius in that direction can no more: mounted high enough, or not mounted, we must fare forth. Hardly is poor Rohan, the Necklace-Cardinal, safely bestowed in the Auvergne Mountains, Dame de Lamotte (unsafely) in the Salpétrière, and that mournful business hushed up, when our sanguine Controller once more astonishes the world. An expedient, unheard of for these hundred and sixty years, has been propounded; and, by dint of suasion (for his light audacity, his hope and eloquence are matchless) has been got adopted,—*Convocation of the Notables.*

Let notable persons, the actual or virtual rulers of their districts, be summoned from all sides of France: let a true tale, of his Majesty's patriotic purposes and wretched pecuniary impossibilities, be suasively told them; and then the question put: What are we to do? Surely to adopt healing measures; such as the magic of genius will unfold; such as, once sanctioned by Notables, all Parlements and all men must, with more or less reluctance, submit to.

CHAPTER III

THE NOTABLES

HERE, then, is verily a sign and wonder; visible to the whole world; bodeful of much. The Œil-de-Bœuf dolorously grumbles; were we not well as we stood,—quenching conflagrations by oil? Constitutional Philosophedom starts with joyful surprise; stares eagerly what the result will be. The public creditor, the public debtor, the whole thinking and thoughtless public have their several surprises, joyful or sorrowful. Count Mirabeau, who has got his matrimonial and other Lawsuits huddled up, better or worse; and works now in the dimmest element at Berlin; compiling *Prussian Monarchies*, Pamphlets *On Cagliostro*; writing, with pay, but not with honourable recognition, innumerable Despatches for his Government,—scents or descries richer quarry from afar. He, like an eagle or vulture, or mixture of both, preens his wings for flight homewards.[1]

M. de Calonne has stretched out an Aaron's Rod over France; miraculous; and is summoning quite unexpected things. Audacity and hope alternate in him with misgivings; though the sanguine-valiant side carries it. Anon he writes to an intimate friend, '*Je me fais pitié à moi-même* (I am an object of pity to myself)'; anon, invites some dedicating Poet or Poetaster to sing 'this Assembly of the Notables, and the Revolution that is preparing.'[2] Preparing indeed; and a matter to be sung,—only not till we have *seen* it, and what the issue of it is. In deep obscure unrest, all things have so long gone rocking and swaying: will M. de Calonne, with this his alchemy of the Notables, fasten all together again, and get new revenues? Or wrench all asunder; so that it go no longer rocking and swaying, but clashing and colliding?

Be this as it may, in the bleak short days, we behold men of weight and influence threading the great vortex of French Locomotion, each on his several line, from all sides of France, towards the Château of Versailles: summoned thither *de par le roi*. There, on the 22d day of February 1787, they have met, and got installed: Notables to the number of a Hundred and Thirty-seven, as we count them name by name:[3] add Seven Princes of the Blood, it makes the round Gross of Notables. Men of the sword, men of the robe; Peers, dignified Clergy, Parlementary Presidents: divided into Seven Boards (*Bureaux*); under our Seven Princes of the Blood, Monsieur, D'Artois, Penthièvre, and the rest; among whom let not our new Duke d'Orléans (for, since 1785, he is Chartres no longer) be forgotten. Never yet made Admiral, and now turning the corner of his fortieth year, with spoiled blood and prospects; half-weary of a world which is more than half-weary of him, Monseigneur's future is most questionable. Not in illumination and insight, not even in conflagration; but, as was said, 'in dull smoke and ashes of outburnt sensualities,' does he live and digest. Sumptuosity and sordidness; revenge, life-weariness, ambition, darkness, putrescence; and, say, in sterling money, three hundred thousand a year,—were this poor Prince once to burst loose from his Court-moorings, to what regions, with what phenomena, might he not sail and drift! Happily as yet he 'affects to hunt daily'; sits there, since he must sit, presiding that Bureau of his, with dull moon-visage, dull glassy eyes, as if it were a mere tedium to him.

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[1] Fils Adoptif, *Mémoires de Mirabeau*, t. iv. livv. 4 et 5.

[2] *Biographie Universelle*, § Calonne (by Guizot).

[3] Lacretelle, iii. 286. Montgaillard, i. 347.

We observe finally, that Count Mirabeau has actually arrived. He descends from Berlin, on the scene of action; glares into it with flashing sun-glance; discerns that it will do nothing for him. He had hoped these Notables might need a Secretary. They do need one; but have fixed on Dupont de Nemours; a man of smaller fame, but then of better;—who indeed, as his friends often hear, labours under this complaint, surely not a universal one, of having 'five kings to correspond with.'[1] The pen of a Mirabeau cannot become an official one; nevertheless it remains a pen. In defect of Secretaryship, he sets to denouncing Stock-brokerage (*Dénonciation de l'Agiotage*); testifying, as his wont is, by loud bruit, that he is present and busy;—till, warned by friend Talleyrand, and even by Calonne himself underhand, that 'a seventeenth *Lettre-de-Cachet* may be launched against him,' he timefully flits over the marches.

And now, in stately royal apartments, as Pictures of that time still represent them, our hundred and forty-four Notables sit organised; ready to hear and consider. Controller Calonne is dreadfully behindhand with his speeches, his preparatives; however, the man's 'facility of work' is known to us. For freshness of style, lucidity, ingenuity, largeness of view, that opening Harangue of his was unsurpassable:—had not the subject-matter been so appalling. A Deficit, concerning which accounts vary, and the Controller's own account is not unquestioned; but which all accounts agree in representing as 'enormous.' This is the epitome of our Controller's difficulties: and then his means? Mere Turgotism; for thither, it seems, we must come at last: Provincial Assemblies; new Taxation; nay, strangest of all, new Land-tax, what he calls *Subvention Territoriale*, from which neither Privileged nor Unprivileged, Noblemen, Clergy, nor Parlementeers, shall be exempt!

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[1] Dumont, *Souvenirs sur Mirabeau* (Paris, 1832), p. 20.

Foolish enough! These Privileged Classes have been used to tax; levying toll, tribute and custom, at all hands, while a penny was left: but to be themselves taxed? Of such Privileged persons, meanwhile, do these Notables, all but the merest fraction, consist. Headlong Calonne had given no heed to the 'composition,' or judicious packing of them; but chosen such Notables as were really notable; trusting for the issue to offhand ingenuity, good fortune, and eloquence that never yet failed. Headlong Controller-General! Eloquence can do much, but not all. Orpheus, with eloquence grown rhythmic, musical (what we call Poetry), drew iron tears from the cheek of Pluto: but by what witchery of rhyme or prose wilt thou from the pocket of Plutus draw gold?

Accordingly, the storm that now rose and began to whistle round Calonne, first in these Seven Bureaus, and then on the outside of them, awakened by them, spreading wider and wider over all France, threatens to become unappeasable. A Deficit so enormous! Mismanagement, profusion is too clear. Peculation itself is hinted at; nay, Lafayette and others go so far as to speak it out, with attempts at proof. The blame of his Deficit our brave Calonne, as was natural, had endeavoured to shift from himself on his predecessors; not excepting even Necker. But now Necker vehemently denies; whereupon an 'angry Correspondence,' which also finds its way into print.

In the Œil-de-Bœuf, and her Majesty's private Apartments, an eloquent Controller, with his 'Madame, if it is but difficult,' had been persuasive: but, alas, the cause is now carried elsewhither. Behold him, one of these sad days, in Monsieur's Bureau; to which all the other Bureaus have sent deputies. He is standing at bay: alone; exposed to an incessant fire of questions, interpellations, objurgations, from those 'hundred and thirty-seven' pieces of logic-ordnance,—what we may well call *bouches à feu*, fire-mouths literally! Never, according to Besenval, or hardly ever, had such display of intellect, dexterity, coolness, suasive eloquence, been made by man. To the raging play of so many fire-mouths he opposes nothing angrier than light-beams, self-possession, and fatherly smiles. With the imperturbablest bland clearness, he, for five hours long, keeps answering the incessant volley of fiery captious questions, reproachful interpellations; in words prompt as lightning, quiet as light. Nay, the cross-fire too: such side-questions and incidental interpellations as, in the heat of the main-battle, he (having only one tongue) could not get answered; these also he takes up, at the first slake; answers even these.[1] Could blandest suasive eloquence have saved France, she were saved.

Heavy-laden Controller! In the Seven Bureaus seems nothing but hindrance: in Monsieur's Bureau, a Loménie de Brienne, Archbishop of Toulouse, with an eye himself to the Controllership, stirs up the Clergy; there are meetings, underground intrigues. Neither from without anywhere comes sign of help or hope. For the Nation (where Mirabeau is now, with stentor-lungs, 'denouncing Agio') the Controller has hitherto done nothing, or less. For Philosophedom he has done as good as nothing,—sent out some scientific Lapérouse, or the like: and is he not in 'angry correspondence' with its Necker? The very Œil-de-Bœuf looks questionable; a falling Controller has no friends. Solid M. de Vergennes, who with his phlegmatic judicious punctuality might have kept down many things, died the very week before these sorrowful

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[1] Besenval, iii. 196.

Notables met. And now a Seal-keeper, *Garde-des-Sceaux* Miroménil is thought to be playing the traitor: spinning plots for Loménie-Brienne! Queen's-Reader Abbé de Vermond, unloved individual, was Brienne's creature, the work of his hands from the first: it may be feared the backstairs passage is open, the ground getting mined under our feet. Treacherous Garde-des-Sceaux Miroménil, at least, should be dismissed; Lamoignon, the eloquent Notable, a stanch man, with connections, and even ideas, Parlement-President yet intent on reforming Parlements, were not he the right Keeper? So, for one, thinks busy Besenval; and, at dinner-table, rounds the same into the Controller's ear,—who always, in the intervals of landlord-duties, listens to him as with charmed look, but answers nothing positive.[1]

Alas, what to answer? The force of private intrigue, and then also the force of public opinion, grows so dangerous, confused! Philosophedom sneers aloud, as if its Necker already triumphed. The gaping populace gapes over Woodcuts or Copper-cuts; where, for example, a Rustic is represented convoking the Poultry of his barnyard, with this opening address: 'Dear animals, I have assembled you to advise me what sauce I shall dress you with'; to which a Cock responding, 'We don't want to be eaten,' is checked by 'You wander from the point (*Vous vous écartez de la question*).'[2] Laughter and logic; ballad-singer, pamphleteer; epigram and caricature: what wind of public opinion is this,—as if the Cave of the Winds were bursting loose! At nightfall, President Lamoignon steals over to the Controller's; finds him 'walking with large strides in his chamber, like one out of himself.'[3] With rapid confused speech the Controller begs M. de Lamoignon to give him 'an advice.' Lamoignon candidly answers that, except in regard to his own anticipated Keepership, unless that would prove remedial, he really cannot take upon him to advise.

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[1] Besenval, iii. 203.

[2] Republished in the *Musée de la Caricature* (Paris, 1834).

[3] Besenval, iii. 209.

'On the Monday after Easter,' the 9th of April 1787, a date one rejoices to verify, for nothing can excel the indolent falsehood of these *Histoires* and *Mémoires*,—'On the Monday after Easter, as I, Besenval, was riding towards Romainville to the Maréchal de Ségur's, I met a friend on the Boulevards, who told me that M. de Calonne was out. A little farther on came M. the Duke d'Orléans, dashing towards me, head to the wind' (trotting *à l'Anglaise*), 'and confirmed the news.'[1] It is true news. Treacherous Garde-des-Sceaux Miroménil is gone, and Lamoignon is appointed in his room: but appointed for his own profit only, not for the Controller's: 'next day' the Controller also has had to move. A little longer he may linger near; be seen among the money-changers, and even 'working in the Controller's office,' where much lies unfinished: but neither will that hold. Too strong blows and beats this tempest of public opinion, of private intrigue, as from the Cave of all the Winds; and blows him (higher Authority giving sign) out of Paris and France,—over the horizon, into Invisibility, or outer Darkness.

Such destiny the magic of genius could not for ever avert. Ungrateful Œil-de-Bœuf! did he not miraculously rain gold manna on you; so that, as a Courtier said, 'All the world held out its hand, and I held out my hat,'—for a time? Himself is poor; penniless, had not a 'Financier's widow in Lorraine' offered him, though he was turned of fifty, her hand and the rich purse it held. Dim henceforth shall be his activity, though unwearied: Letters to the King, Appeals, Prognostications; Pamphlets (from London), written with the old suasive facility; which however do not persuade. Luckily his widow's purse fails not. Once, in a year or two, some shadow of him shall be seen hovering on the Northern Border, seeking election as National Deputy; but be sternly beckoned away. Dimmer then, far-borne over utmost European lands, in uncertain twilight of diplomacy, he shall hover, intriguing for 'Exiled Princes,' and have adventures; be

[1] Besenval, iii. 211.

overset into the Rhine-stream and half-drowned, nevertheless save his papers dry. Unwearied, but in vain! In France he works miracles no more; shall hardly return thither to find a grave. Farewell, thou facile sanguine Controller-General, with thy light rash hand, thy suasive mouth of gold: worse men there have been, and better; but to thee also was allotted a task,—of raising the wind, and the winds; and thou hast done it.

But now, while Ex-Controller Calonne flies storm-driven over the horizon, in this singular way, what has become of the Controllership? It hangs vacant, one may say; extinct, like the Moon in her vacant interlunar cave. Two preliminary shadows, poor M. Fourqueux, poor M. Villedeuil, do hold, in quick succession, some simulacrum of it,[1]—as the new Moon will sometimes shine out with a dim preliminary old one in her arms. Be patient, ye Notables! An actual new Controller is certain, and even ready; were the indispensable manœuvres but gone through. Long-headed Lamoignon, with Home-Secretary Breteuil, and Foreign-Secretary Montmorin have exchanged looks; let these three once meet and speak. Who is it that is strong in the Queen's favour, and the Abbé de Vermond's? That is a man of great capacity? Or at least that has struggled, these fifty years, to have it thought great; now, in the Clergy's name, demanding to have Protestant death-penalties 'put in execution'; now flaunting it in the Œil-de-Bœuf, as the gayest man-pleaser and woman-pleaser; gleaning even a good word from Philosophedom and your Voltaires and D'Alemberts? That has a party ready-made for him in the Notables?—Loménie de Brienne, Archbishop of Toulouse! answer all the three, with the clearest instantaneous concord; and rush off to propose him to the King; 'in such haste,' says Besenval, 'that M. de Lamoignon had to borrow a *simarre*,' seemingly some kind of cloth apparatus necessary for that.[2]

Loménie-Brienne, who had all his life 'felt a kind of predestination for the highest offices,' has now therefore obtained them. He presides over the Finances; he shall have the title of Prime Minister itself, and the effort of his long life be realised. Unhappy only that it took such talent and industry to *gain* the place; that to *qualify* for it hardly any talent or industry was left disposable! Looking now into his inner man, what qualification he may have, Loménie beholds, not without astonishment, next to nothing but vacuity and possibility. Principles or methods, acquirement outward or inward (for his very body is wasted, by hard tear and wear) he finds none; not so much as a plan, even an unwise one. Lucky, in these circumstances, that Calonne has had a plan! Calonne's plan was gathered from Turgot's and Necker's by compilation; shall become Loménie's by adoption. Not in vain has Loménie studied the working of the British Constitution; for he professes to have some Anglomania, of a sort. Why, in that free country, does one Minister, driven out by Parliament, vanish from his King's presence, and another enter, borne in by Parliament?[1] Surely not for mere change (which is ever wasteful); but that all men may have share of what is going; and so the strife of Freedom indefinitely prolong itself, and no harm be done.

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[1] Besenval, iii. 225.

[2] *Ib.* iii. 224.

The Notables, mollified by Easter festivities, by the sacrifice of Calonne, are not in the worst humour. Already his Majesty, while the 'interlunar shadows' were in office, had held session of Notables; and from his throne delivered promissory conciliatory eloquence: 'the Queen stood waiting at a window, till his carriage came back; and Monsieur from afar clapped hands to her,' in sign that all was well.[2] It has had the best effect; if such do but last. Leading Notables meanwhile can be 'caressed'; Brienne's new gloss, Lamoignon's long head will profit somewhat; conciliatory eloquence shall not be wanting. On the whole, however, is it not undeniable that this of ousting Calonne and adopting the plans of Calonne, is a measure which, to produce its best effect, should be looked at from a certain distance, cursorily; not dwelt on with minute near scrutiny? In a word, that no service the Notables could now do were so obliging as, in some handsome manner, to—take themselves away? Their 'Six Propositions' about Provisional Assemblies, suppression of *Corvées* and suchlike, can be accepted without criticism. The *Subvention* or Land-tax, and much else, one must glide hastily over; safe nowhere but in flourishes of conciliatory eloquence. Till at length, on this 25th of May, year 1787, in solemn final session, there bursts forth what we can call an explosion of eloquence; King, Loménie, Lamoignon and retinue taking up the successive strain; in harangues to the number of ten, besides his Majesty's, which last the livelong day;—whereby, as in a kind of choral anthem, or bravura peal, of thanks, praises, promises, the Notables are, so to speak, organed out, and dismissed to their respective places of abode. They had sat, and talked, some nine weeks: they were the first Notables since Richelieu's, in the year 1626.

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[1] Montgaillard, *Histoire de France*, i. 410-17.

[2] Besenval, iii. 220.

By some Historians, sitting much at their ease, in the safe distance, Loménie has been blamed for this dismissal of his Notables: nevertheless it was clearly time. There are things, as we said, which should not be dwelt on with minute close scrutiny: over hot coals you cannot glide too fast. In these Seven Bureaus, where no work could be done, unless talk were work, the questionablest matters were coming up. Lafayette, for example, in Monseigneur d'Artois' Bureau, took upon him to set forth more than one deprecatory oration about *Lettres-de-Cachet*, Liberty of the Subject, *Agio*, and suchlike; which Monseigneur endeavouring to repress, was answered that a Notable being summoned to speak his opinion must speak it.[1]

Thus too his Grace the Archbishop of Aix perorating once, with a plaintive pulpit-tone, in these words: 'Tithe, that free-will offering of the piety of Christians'—'Tithe,' interrupted Duke la Rochefoucault, with the cold business-manner he has learned from the English, 'that free-will offering of the piety of Christians; on which there are now forty-thousand lawsuits in this realm.'[1] Nay, Lafayette, bound to speak his opinion, went the length, one day, of proposing to convoke a 'National Assembly.' 'You demand States-General?' asked Monseigneur with an air of minatory surprise.—'Yes, Monseigneur; and even better than that.'—'Write it,' said Monseigneur to the Clerks.[2]—Written accordingly it is; and what is more, will be acted by and by.

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[1] Montgaillard, i. 360.

CHAPTER IV

LOMÉNIE'S EDICTS

Thus, then, have the Notables returned home; carrying, to all quarters of France, such notions of deficit, decrepitude, distraction; and that States-General will cure it, or will not cure it but kill it. Each Notable, we may fancy, is as a funereal torch; disclosing hideous abysses, better left hid! The unquietest humour possesses all men; ferments, seeks issue, in pamphleteering, caricaturing, projecting, declaiming; vain jangling of thought, word, and deed.

It is Spiritual Bankruptcy, long tolerated; verging now towards Economical Bankruptcy, and become intolerable. For from the lowest dumb rank, the inevitable misery, as was predicted, has spread upwards. In every man is some obscure feeling that his position, oppressive or else oppressed, is a false one: all men, in one or the other acrid dialect, as assaulters or as defenders, must give vent to the unrest that is in them. Of such stuff national well-being, and the glory of rulers, is not made. O Loménie, what a wild-heaving, waste-looking, hungry and angry world hast thou, after lifelong effort, got promoted to take charge of!

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[1] Dumont, *Souvenirs sur Mirabeau*, p. 21.

[2] Toulongeon, *Histoire de France depuis la Révolution de* 1789 (Paris, 1803), t. i. app. 4.

Loménie's first Edicts are mere soothing ones: creation of Provincial Assemblies, 'for apportioning the imposts,' when we get any; suppression of *Corvées* or statute-labour; alleviation of *Gabelle.* Soothing measures, recommended by the Notables; long clamoured for by all liberal men. Oil cast on the waters has been known to produce a good effect. Before venturing with great essential measures, Loménie will see this singular 'swell of the public mind' abate somewhat.

Most proper, surely. But what if it were not a swell of the abating kind? There are swells that come of upper tempest and wind-gust. But again there are swells that come of subterranean pent wind, some say; and even of inward decomposition, of decay that has become self-combustion:—as when, according to Neptuno-Plutonic Geology, the World is all decayed down into due attritus of this sort; and shall now be *exploded*, and new-made! These latter abate not by oil.—The fool says in his heart, How shall not tomorrow be as yesterday; as all days,—which were once tomorrows? The wise man, looking on this France, moral, intellectual, economical, sees, 'in short, all the symptoms he has ever met with in history,'—*un*abatable by soothing Edicts.

Meanwhile, abate or not, cash must be had; and for that, quite another sort of Edicts, namely 'bursal' or fiscal ones. How easy were fiscal Edicts, did you know for certain that the Parlement of Paris would what they call 'register' them! Such right of registering, properly of mere *writing down*, the Parlement has got by old wont; and, though but a Law-Court, can remonstrate, and higgle considerably about the same. Hence many quarrels; desperate Maupeou devices, and victory and defeat;—a quarrel now near forty years long. Hence fiscal Edicts, which otherwise were easy enough, become such problems. For example, is there not Calonne's

Subvention Territoriale, universal, unexempting Land-tax; the sheet-anchor of Finance? Or, to show, so far as possible, that one is not without original finance talent, Loménie himself can devise an *Edit du Timbre* or Stamp-tax,—borrowed also, it is true; but then from America: may it prove luckier in France than there!

France has her resources: nevertheless, it cannot be denied, the aspect of that Parlement is questionable. Already among the Notables, in that final symphony of dismissal, the Paris President had an ominous tone. Adrien Duport, quitting magnetic sleep, in this agitation of the world, threatens to rouse himself into preternatural wakefulness. Shallower but also louder, there is magnetic D'Espréménil, with his tropical heat (he was born at Madras); with his dusky confused violence; holding of Illumination, Animal Magnetism, Public Opinion, Adam Weisshaupt, Harmodius and Aristogiton, and all manner of confused violent things: of whom can come no good. The very Peerage is infected with the leaven. Our Peers have, in too many cases, laid aside their frogs, laces, bagwigs; and go about in English costume, or ride rising in their stirrups,—in the most headlong manner; nothing but insubordination, eleutheromania, confused unlimited opposition in their heads. Questionable: not to be ventured upon, if we had a Fortunatus' Purse! But Loménie has waited all June, casting on the waters what oil he had; and now, betide as it may, the two Finance Edicts must out. On the 6th of July, he forwards his proposed Stamp-tax and Land-tax to the Parlement of Paris; and, as if putting his own leg foremost, not his borrowed Calonne's-leg, places the Stamp-tax first in order.

Alas, the Parlement will *not* register: the Parlement demands instead a 'state of the expenditure,' a 'state of the contemplated reductions'; 'states' enough; which his Majesty must decline to furnish! Discussions arise; patriotic eloquence: the Peers are summoned. Does the Nemean Lion begin to bristle? Here surely is a duel, which France and the Universe may look upon: with prayers; at lowest, with curiosity and bets. Paris stirs with new animation. The outer courts of the Palais de Justice roll with unusual crowds, coming and going; their huge outer hum mingles with the clang of patriotic eloquence within, and gives vigour to it. Poor Loménie gazes from the distance, little comforted; has his invisible emissaries flying to and fro, assiduous, without result.

So pass the sultry dog-days, in the most electric manner; and the whole month of July. And still, in the Sanctuary of Justice, sounds nothing but Harmodius-Aristogiton eloquence, environed with the hum of crowding Paris; and no registering accomplished, and no 'states' furnished. 'States?' said a lively Parlementeer: 'Messieurs, the states that should be furnished us, in my opinion are the STATES-GENERAL.' On which timely joke there follow cachinnatory buzzes of approval. What a word to be spoken in the Palais de Justice! Old D'Ormesson (the Ex-Controller's uncle) shakes his judicious head; far enough from laughing. But the outer courts, and Paris and France, catch the glad sound, and repeat it; shall repeat it, and re-echo and reverberate it, till it grow a deafening peal. Clearly enough here is no registering to be thought of.

The pious Proverb says, 'There are remedies for all things but death.' When a Parlement refuses registering, the remedy, by long practice, has become familiar to the simplest: a Bed of Justice. One complete month this Parlement has spent in mere idle jargoning, and sound and fury; the *Timbre* Edict not registered, or like to be; the *Subvention* not yet so much as spoken of. On the 6th of August let the whole refractory Body roll out, in wheeled vehicles, as far as the King's Château of Versailles; there shall the King, holding his Bed of Justice, *order* them, by his own royal lips, to register. They may remonstrate, in an under tone; but they must obey, lest a worse unknown thing befall them.

It is done: the Parlement has rolled out, on royal summons; has heard the express royal order to register. Whereupon it has rolled back again, amid the hushed expectancy of men. And now, behold, on the morrow, this Parlement, seated once more in its own Palais, with 'crowds inundating the outer courts,' not only does not register, but (O portent!) declares all that was done on the prior day to be *null*, and the Bed of Justice as good as a futility! In the history of France here verily is a new feature. Nay better still, our heroic Parlement, getting suddenly enlightened on several things, declares that, for its part, it is incompetent to register Tax-edicts at all,—having done it by mistake, during these late centuries; that for such act one authority only is competent: the assembled Three Estates of the Realm!

To such length can the universal spirit of a Nation penetrate the most isolated Body-corporate: say rather, with such weapons, homicidal and suicidal, in exasperated political duel, will Bodies-corporate fight! But, in any case, is not this the real death-grapple of war and internecine duel, Greek meeting Greek; whereon men, had they even no interest in it, might look with interest unspeakable? Crowds, as was said, inundate the outer courts: inundation of young eleutheromaniac Noblemen in English costume, uttering audacious speeches; of Procureurs, Basoche-Clerks, who are idle in these days; of Loungers, Newsmongers and other nondescript classes,—rolls tumultuous there. 'From three to four thousand persons,' waiting eagerly to hear the *Arrêtés* (Resolutions) you arrive at within; applauding with bravos, with the clapping of from six to eight thousand hands! Sweet also is the meed of patriotic eloquence, when your D'Espréménil, your Fréteau, or Sabatier, issuing from his Demosthenic Olympus, the thunder being hushed for the day, is welcomed, in the outer courts, with a shout from four thousand throats; is borne home shoulder-high 'with benedictions,' and strikes the stars with his sublime head.

CHAPTER V

LOMÉNIE'S THUNDERBOLTS

ARISE, Loménie-Brienne: here is no case for 'Letters of Jussion'; for faltering or compromise. Thou seest the whole loose *fluent* population of Paris (whatsoever is not solid, and fixed to work) inundating these outer courts, like a loud destructive deluge; the very Basoche of Lawyers' Clerks talks sedition. The lower classes, in this duel of Authority with Authority, Greek throttling Greek, have ceased to respect the City-Watch: Police-satellites are marked on the back with chalk (the M signifies *mouchard*, spy); they are hustled, hunted like *feræ naturæ*. Subordinate rural Tribunals send messengers of congratulation, of adherence. Their Fountain of Justice is becoming a Fountain of Revolt. The Provincial Parlements look on, with intent eye, with breathless wishes, while their elder sister of Paris does battle: the whole Twelve are of one blood and temper; the victory of one is that of all.

Ever worse it grows: on the 10th of August, there is '*Plainte*' emitted touching the 'prodigalities of Calonne,' and permission to 'proceed' against him. No registering, but instead of it, denouncing: of dilapidation, peculation; and ever the burden of the song, States-General! Have the royal armories no thunder-bolt, that thou couldst, O Loménie, with red right-hand, launch it among these Demosthenic theatrical thunder-barrels, mere resin and noise for most part;—and shatter, and smite them silent? On the night of the 14th of August, Loménie launches his thunderbolt, or handful of them. Letters named of the Seal (*de Cachet*), as many as needful, some sixscore and odd, are delivered overnight. And so, next day betimes, the whole Parlement, once more set on wheels, is rolling incessantly towards Troyes in Champagne; 'escorted,' says History, 'with the blessings of all people';

the very innkeepers and postillions looking gratuitously reverent.[1] This is the 15th of August 1787.

What will not people bless; in their extreme need! Seldom had the Parlement of Paris deserved much blessing, or received much. An isolated Body-corporate, which, out of old confusions (while the Sceptre of the Sword was confusedly struggling to become a Sceptre of the Pen), had got itself together, better and worse, as Bodies-corporate do, to satisfy some dim desire of the world, and many clear desires of individuals; and so had grown, in the course of centuries, on concession, on acquirement and usurpation, to be what we see it: a prosperous Social Anomaly, deciding Lawsuits, sanctioning or rejecting Laws; and withal disposing of its places and offices by sale for ready-money,—which method sleek President Hénault, after meditation, will demonstrate to be the indifferent-best.[2]

In such a Body, existing by purchase for ready-money, there could not be excess of public spirit; there might well be excess of eagerness to divide the public spoil. Men in helmets have divided that, with swords; men in wigs, with quill and inkhorn, to divide it: and even more hatefully these latter, if more peaceably; for the wig-method is at once irresistibler and baser. By long experience, says Besenval, it has been found useless to sue a Parlementeer at law; no Officer of Justice will serve a writ on one: his wig and gown are his Vulcan's-panoply, his enchanted cloak-of-darkness.

The Parlement of Paris may count itself an unloved body; mean, not magnanimous, on the political side. Were the King weak, always (as now) has his Parlement barked, cur-like at his heels; with what popular cry there might be. Were he strong, it barked before his face; hunting for him as his alert beagle. An unjust Body; where foul influences have more than once worked shameful perversion of judgment. Does not, in these very days, the blood of murdered Lally cry aloud for vengeance? Baited, circumvented, driven mad like the snared lion, Valour had to sink extinguished under vindictive Chicane. Behold him, that hapless Lally, his wild dark soul looking through his wild dark face; trailed on the ignominious death-hurdle; the voice of his despair choked by a wooden gag! The wild fire-soul that has known only peril and toil; and, for three-score years, has buffeted against Fate's obstruction and men's perfidy, like genius and courage amid poltroonery, dishonesty and commonplace; faithfully enduring and endeavouring,—O Parlement of Paris, dost thou reward it with a gibbet and a gag?[1] The dying Lally bequeathed his memory to his boy; a young Lally has arisen, demanding redress in the name of God and man. The Parlement of Paris does its utmost to defend the indefensible, abominable; nay, what is singular, dusky-glowing Aristogiton d'Espréménil is the man chosen to be its spokesman in that.

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[1] A. Lameth, *Histoire de l'Assemblée Constituante* (Int. 73).

[2] *Abrégé Chronologique*, p. 975.

Such Social Anomaly is it that France now blesses. An unclean Social Anomaly; but in duel against another worse! The exiled Parlement is felt to have 'covered itself with glory.' There are quarrels in which even Satan, bringing help, were not unwelcome; even Satan, fighting stiffly, might cover himself with glory,—of a temporary sort.

But what a stir in the outer courts of the Palais, when Paris finds its Parlement trundled off to Troyes in Champagne; and nothing left but a few mute Keepers of Records; the Demosthenic thunder become extinct, the martyrs of liberty clean gone! Confused wail and menace rises from the four thousand throats of Procureurs, Basoche-Clerks, Nondescripts, and Anglomaniac Noblesse; ever new idlers crowd to see and hear; Rascality, with increasing numbers and vigour, hunts *mouchards*. Loud whirlpool rolls through these spaces; the rest of the City, fixed to its work, cannot yet go rolling. Audacious placards are legible; in and about the Palais, the speeches are as good as seditious. Surely the temper of Paris is much changed. On the third day of this business (18th of August), Monsieur and Monseigneur d'Artois, coming in state-carriages, according to use and wont, to have these late obnoxious *Arrêtés* and Protests 'expunged' from the Records, are received in the most marked manner. Monsieur, who is thought to be in opposition, is met with vivats and strewed flowers: Monseigneur, on the other hand, with silence; with murmurs, which rise to hisses and groans; nay an irreverent Rascality presses towards him in floods, with such hissing vehemence, that the Captain of the Guards has to give order, '*Haut les armes* (Handle arms)!'—at which thunder-word, indeed, and the flash of the clear iron, the Rascal-flood recoils, through all avenues, fast enough.[1] New features these. Indeed, as good M. de Malesherbes pertinently remarks, 'it is a quite new kind of contest this with the Parlements': no transitory sputter, as from collision of hard bodies; but more like 'the first sparks of what, if not quenched, may become a great conflagration.'[2]

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[1] 9th May 1766: *Biographie Universelle*, § Lally.

This good Malesherbes sees himself now again in the King's Council, after an absence of ten years: Loménie would profit if not by the faculties of the man, yet by the name he has. As for the man's opinion, it is not listened to;—wherefore he will soon withdraw, a second time; back to his books and his trees. In such King's Council what can a good man profit? Turgot tries it not a second time: Turgot has quitted France and this Earth, some years ago; and now cares for none of these things. Singular enough: Turgot, this same Loménie, and the Abbé Morellet were once a trio of young friends; fellow-scholars in the Sorbonne. Forty new years have carried them severally thus far.

Meanwhile the Parlement sits daily at Troyes, calling cases; and daily adjourns, no Procureur making his appearance to plead. Troyes is as hospitable as could be looked for: nevertheless one has comparatively a dull life. No crowds now to carry you, shoulder-high, to the immortal gods; scarcely a

[1] Montgaillard, i. 369. Besenval, etc.

[2] Montgaillard, i. 373.

Patriot or two will drive out so far, and bid you be of firm courage. You are in furnished lodgings, far from home and domestic comfort : little to do but wander over the unlovely Champagne fields ; seeing the grapes ripen ; taking counsel about the thousand-times consulted : a prey to tedium ; in danger even that Paris may forget you. Messengers come and go : pacific Loménie is not slack in negotiating, promising ; D'Ormesson and the prudent elder Members see no good in strife.

After a dull month, the Parlement, yielding and retaining, makes truce, as all Parlements must. The Stamp-tax is withdrawn : the *Subvention* Land-tax is also withdrawn ; but, in its stead, there is granted, what they call a 'Prorogation of the Second Twentieth,'—itself a kind of Land-tax, but not so oppressive to the Influential classes ; which lies mainly on the Dumb class. Moreover, secret promises exist (on the part of the Elders), that finances may be raised by Loan. Of the ugly word States-General there shall be no mention.

And so, on the 20th of September, our exiled Parlement returns : D'Espréménil said, 'it went out covered with glory, but had come back covered with mud (*de boue*).' Not so, Aristogiton ; or if so, thou surely art the man to clean it.

CHAPTER VI

LOMENIE'S PLOTS

WAS ever unfortunate Chief Minister so bestead as Loménie-Brienne? The reins of the State fairly in his hand these six months ; and not the smallest motive-power (of Finance) to stir from the spot with, this way or that ! He flourishes his whip, but advances not. Instead of ready-money, there is nothing but rebellious debating and recalcitrating.

Far is the public mind from having calmed ; it goes chafing and fuming ever worse : and in the royal coffers, with such yearly Deficit running on, there is hardly the colour of coin. Ominous prognostics! Malesherbes, seeing an exhausted, exasperated France grow hotter and hotter, talks of 'conflagration': Mirabeau, without talk, has, as we perceive, descended on Paris again, close on the rear of the Parlement,[1]—not to quit his native soil any more.

Over the Frontiers, behold Holland invaded by Prussia;[2] the French party oppressed, England and the Stadtholder triumphing: to the sorrow of War-secretary Montmorin and all men. But without money, sinews of war, as of work, and of existence itself, what can a Chief Minister do? Taxes profit little: this of the Second Twentieth falls not due till next year; and will then, with its 'strict valuation,' produce more controversy than cash. Taxes on the Privileged Classes cannot be got registered; are intolerable to our supporters themselves: taxes on the Unprivileged yield nothing,—as from a thing drained dry more cannot be drawn. Hope is nowhere, if not in the old refuge of Loans.

To Loménie, aided by the long head of Lamoignon, deeply pondering this sea of troubles, the thought suggested itself: Why not have a Successive Loan (*Emprunt Successif*), or Loan that went on lending, year after year, as much as needful; say, till 1792? The trouble of registering such Loan were the same: we had then breathing time; money to work with, at least to subsist on. Edict of a Successive Loan must be proposed. To conciliate the Philosophes, let a liberal Edict walk in front of it, for emancipation of Protestants; let a liberal Promise guard the rear of it, that when our Loan ends, in that final 1792, the States-General shall be convoked.

Such liberal Edict of Protestant Emancipation, the time having come for it, shall cost a Loménie as little as the 'Death-penalties to be put in execution' did. As for the liberal Promise, of States-General, it can be fulfilled or not: the fulfilment is five good years off; in five years much intervenes. But the registering? Ah, truly, there is the difficulty!—However, we have that promise of the Elders, given secretly at Troyes. Judicious gratuities, cajoleries, underground intrigues, with old Foulon, named '*Ame damnée*, Familiar-demon, of the Parlement,' may perhaps do the rest. At worst and lowest, the Royal Authority has resources,—which ought it not to put forth? If it cannot realise money, the Royal Authority is as good as dead; dead of that surest and miserablest death, inanition. Risk and win; without risk all is already lost! For the rest, as in enterprises of pith, a touch of stratagem often proves furthersome, his Majesty announces *a Royal Hunt*, for the 19th of November next; and all whom it concerns are joyfully getting their gear ready.

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[1] Fils Adoptif, *Mirabeau*, iv. l. 5.

[2] October 1787. Montgaillard, i. 374. Besenval, iii. 283.

Royal Hunt indeed; but of two-legged unfeathered game! At eleven in the morning of that Royal-Hunt day, 19th of November 1787, unexpected blare of trumpeting, tumult of charioteering and cavalcading disturbs the Seat of Justice: his Majesty is come, with Garde-des-Sceaux Lamoignon, and Peers and retinue, to hold Royal Session and have Edicts registered. What a change, since Louis XIV. entered here, in boots; and, whip in hand, ordered his registering to be done,—with an Olympian look, which none durst gainsay; and did, without stratagem, in such unceremonious fashion, hunt as well as register![1] For Louis XVI., on this day, the Registering will be enough; if indeed he and the day suffice for it.

Meanwhile, with fit ceremonial words, the purpose of the royal breast is signified:—Two Edicts, for Protestant Emancipation, for Successive Loan: of both which Edicts our trusty Garde-des-Sceaux Lamoignon will explain the purport; on both which a trusty Parlement is requested to deliver its opinion, each member having free privilege of speech. And so, Lamoignon too having perorated not amiss, and wound up with that Promise of States-General,—the Sphere-music of Parlementary eloquence begins. Explosive, responsive, sphere answering sphere, it waxes louder and louder. The Peers sit attentive; of diverse sentiment: unfriendly to States-General; unfriendly to Despotism, which cannot reward merit, and is suppressing places. But what agitates his highness d'Orléans? The rubicund moon-head goes wagging; darker beams the copper visage, like unscoured copper; in the glazed eye is disquietude; he rolls uneasy in his seat, as if he meant something. Amid unutterable satiety, has sudden new appetite, for new forbidden fruit, been vouchsafed him? Disgust and edacity; laziness that cannot rest; futile ambition, revenge, non-admiralship:—O, within that carbuncled skin what a confusion of confusions sits bottled!

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[1] Dulaure, vi. 306.

'Eight Couriers,' in the course of the day, gallop from Versailles, where Loménie waits palpitating; and gallop back again, not with the best news. In the outer Courts of the Palais, huge buzz of expectation reigns; it is whispered the Chief Minister has lost six votes overnight. And from within, resounds nothing but forensic eloquence, pathetic and even indignant; heartrending appeals to the royal clemency, that his Majesty would please to summon States-General forthwith, and be the Saviour of France:—wherein dusky-glowing D'Espréménil, but still more Sabatier de Cabre, and Fréteau, since named *Commère* Fréteau (Goody Fréteau), are among the loudest. For six mortal hours it lasts, in this manner; the infinite hubbub unslackened.

And so now, when brown dusk is falling through the windows, and no end visible, his Majesty, on hint of Garde-des-Sceaux Lamoignon, opens his royal lips once more to say, in brief, That he must have his Loan-Edict registered.—Momentary deep pause!—See! Monseigneur d'Orléans rises; with moon-visage turned towards the royal platform, he asks, with a delicate graciosity of manner covering unutterable things: 'Whether it is a Bed of Justice, then, or a Royal Session?' Fire flashes on him from the throne and neighbourhood: surly answer that 'it is a Session.' In that case, Monseigneur will crave leave to remark that Edicts cannot be registered by *order* in a Session; and indeed to enter, against such registry, his individual humble Protest. '*Vous êtes bien le maître* (You will do your pleasure),' answers the King; and thereupon, in high state, marches out, escorted by his Court-retinue; D'Orléans himself, as in duty bound, escorting him, but only to the gate. Which duty done, D'Orléans returns in from the gate; redacts his Protest, in the face of an applauding Parlement, an applauding France; and so—has *cut* his Court-moorings, shall we say? And will now sail and drift, fast enough, towards Chaos?

Thou foolish D'Orléans; Equality that art to be! Is Royalty grown a mere wooden Scarecrow; whereon thou, pert scaldheaded crow, mayest alight at pleasure, and peck? Not yet wholly.

Next day, a Lettre-de-Cachet sends D'Orléans to bethink himself in his Château of Villers-Cotterets, where, alas, is no Paris with its joyous necessaries of life; no fascinating indispensable Madame de Buffon,—light wife of a great Naturalist much too old for her. Monseigneur, it is said, does nothing but walk distractedly, at Villers-Cotterets; cursing his stars. Versailles itself shall hear penitent wail from him, so hard is his doom. By a second, simultaneous Lettre-de-Cachet, Goody Fréteau is hurled into the Stronghold of Ham, amid the Norman marshes; by a third, Sabatier de Cabre into Mont St. Michel, amid the Norman quicksands. As for the Parlement, it must, on summons, travel out to Versailles, with its Register-Book under its arm, to have the Protest *biffé* (expunged); not without admonition, and even rebuke. A stroke of authority, which, one might have hoped, would quiet matters.

Unhappily, no: it is a mere taste of the whip to rearing coursers, which makes them rear worse! When a team of Twenty-five Millions begins rearing, what is Loménie's whip? The Parlement will nowise acquiesce meekly; and set to register the Protestant Edict, and do its other work, in salutary fear of these three Lettres-de-Cachet. Far from that, it begins questioning Lettres-de-Cachet generally, their legality, endurability; emits dolorous objurgation, petition on petition to have its three Martyrs delivered; cannot, till that be complied with, so much as think of examining the Protestant Edict, but puts it off always 'till this day week.'[1]

In which objurgatory strain Paris and France joins it, or rather has preceded it; making fearful chorus. And now also the other Parlements, at length opening their mouths, begin to join; some of them, as at Grenoble and at Rennes, with portentous emphasis,—threatening, by way of reprisal, to interdict the very Tax-gatherer.[2] 'In all former contests,' as Malesherbes remarks, 'it was the Parlement that excited the Public; but here it is the Public that excites the Parlement.'

CHAPTER VII

INTERNECINE

WHAT a France, through these winter months of the year 1787! The very Œil-de-Bœuf is doleful, uncertain; with a general feeling among the Suppressed, that it were better to be in Turkey. The Wolf-hounds are suppressed, the Bear-hounds, Duke de Coigny, Duke de Polignac: in the Trianon little-heaven, her Majesty, one evening, takes Besenval's arm; asks his candid opinion. The intrepid Besenval,—having, as he hopes, nothing of the sycophant in *him*,—plainly signifies that, with a Parlement in rebellion, and an Œil-de-Bœuf in suppression, the King's Crown is in danger;—whereupon, singular to say, her Majesty, as if hurt, changed the subject, *et ne me parla plus de rien!*[3]

To whom, indeed, can this poor Queen speak? In need of wise counsel, if ever mortal was; yet beset here only by the hubbub of chaos! Her dwelling-place is so bright to the eye, and confusion and black care darkens it all. Sorrows of the Sovereign, sorrows of the woman, thick-coming sorrows environ her more and more. Lamotte, the Necklace-Countess, has in these late months escaped, perhaps been suffered to escape, from the Salpêtrière. Vain was the hope that Paris might thereby forget her; and this ever-widening lie, and heap of lies, subside. The Lamotte, with a V (for *Voleuse*, Thief) branded on both shoulders, has got to England; and will therefrom emit lie on lie; defiling the highest queenly name: mere distracted lies;[1] which, in its present humour, France will greedily believe.

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[1] Besenval, iii. 309.

[2] Weber, i. 266.

[3] Besenval, iii. 264.

For the rest, it is too clear our Successive Loan is not filling. As indeed, in such circumstances, a Loan registered by expunging of Protests was not the likeliest to fill. Denunciation of *Lettres-de-Cachet*, of Despotism generally, abates not: the Twelve Parlements are busy; the Twelve hundred Placarders, Balladsingers, Pamphleteers. Paris is what, in figurative speech, they call 'flooded with pamphlets (*regorge de brochures*)'; flooded and eddying again. Hot deluge,—from so many Patriot ready-writers, all at the *fervid* or boiling point; each ready-writer, now in the hour of eruption, going like an Iceland Geyser! Against which what can a judicious Friend Morellet do; a Rivarol, an unruly Linguet (well paid for it),—spouting *cold*!

Now also, at length, does come discussion of the Protestant Edict: but only for new embroilment; in pamphlet and counter-pamphlet, increasing the madness of men. Not even Orthodoxy, bedrid as she seemed, but will have a hand in this confusion. She once again in the shape of Abbé Lenfant, 'whom Prelates drive to visit and congratulate,'—raises audible sound from her pulpit-drum.[2] Or mark how D'Espréménil, who has his own confused way in all things, produces at the right moment in Parlementary harangue, a pocket Crucifix, with the apostrophe: 'Will ye crucify him afresh?' *Him*, O D'Espréménil, without scruple;—considering what poor stuff, of ivory and filigree, *he* is made of!

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[1] *Mémoires justificatifs de la Comtesse de Lamotte* (London, 1788). *Vie de Jeanne de St. Remi, Comtesse de Lamotte,* etc. etc. See *Diamond Necklace* (ut suprà).

[2] Lacretelle, iii. 343. Montgaillard, etc.

To all which add only, that poor Brienne has fallen sick; so hard was the tear and wear of his sinful youth, so violent, incessant is this agitation of his foolish old age. Baited, bayed at through so many throats, his Grace, growing consumptive, inflammatory (with *humeur de dartre*), lies reduced to milk diet; in exasperation, almost in desperation; with 'repose,' precisely the impossible recipe, prescribed as the indispensable.[1]

On the whole, what can a poor Government do, but once more recoil ineffectual? The King's Treasury is running towards the lees; and Paris 'eddies with a flood of pamphlets.' At all rates, let the *latter* subside a little! D'Orléans gets back to Raincy, which is nearer Paris and the fair frail Buffon; finally to Paris itself: neither are Fréteau and Sabatier banished for ever. The Protestant Edict is registered; to the joy of Boissy d'Anglas and good Malesherbes: Successive Loan, all protests expunged or else withdrawn, remains open,—the rather as few or none come to fill it. States-General, for which the Parlement has clamoured, and now the whole Nation clamours, will follow 'in five years,'—if indeed not sooner. O Parlement of Paris, what a clamour was that! 'Messieurs,' said old D'Ormesson, 'you will get States-General, and you will repent it.' Like the Horse in the Fable, who, to be avenged of his enemy, applied to the Man. The Man mounted; did swift execution on the enemy; but, unhappily, would not dismount! Instead of five years, let three years pass, and this clamorous Parlement shall have both seen its enemy hurled prostrate, and been itself ridden to foundering (say rather, jugulated for hide and shoes), and lie dead in the ditch.

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[1] Besenval, iii. 317.

Under such omens, however, we have reached the spring of 1788. By no path can the King's Government find passage for itself, but is everywhere shamefully flung back. Beleaguered by Twelve rebellious Parlements, which are grown to be the organs of an angry Nation, it can advance nowhither; can accomplish nothing, obtain nothing, not so much as money to subsist on; but must sit there, seemingly, to be eaten up of Deficit.

The measure of the Iniquity, then, of the Falsehood which has been gathering through long centuries, is nearly full? At least, that of the Misery is! From the hovels of the Twenty-five Millions, the misery, permeating upwards and forwards, as its law is, has got so far,—to the very Œil-de-Bœuf of Versailles. Man's hand, in this blind pain, is set against man: not only the low against the higher, but the higher against each other; Provincial Noblesse is bitter against Court Noblesse; Robe against Sword; Rochet against Pen. But against the King's Government who is *not* bitter? Not even Besenval, in these days. To it all men and bodies of men are become as enemies; it is the centre whereon infinite contentions unite and clash. What new universal vertiginous movement is this; of Institutions, social Arrangements, individual Minds, which once worked coöperative; now rolling and grinding in distracted collision? Inevitable: it is the breaking-up of a World-Solecism, worn out at last, down even to bankruptcy of money! And so this poor Versailles Court, as the chief or central Solecism, finds all the other Solecisms arrayed against it. Most natural! For your human Solecism, be it Person or Combination of Persons, is ever, by law of Nature, uneasy; if verging towards bankruptcy, it is even miserable:—and when would the meanest Solecism consent to blame or amend *itself*, while there remained another to amend?

These threatening signs do not terrify Loménie, much less teach him. Loménie, though of light nature, is not without courage, of a sort. Nay, have we not read of lightest creatures, trained Canary-birds, that could fly cheerfully with lighted matches, and fire cannon; fire whole powder-magazines? To sit and die of Deficit is no part of Loménie's plan. The evil is considerable; but can he not remove it, can he not attack it? At lowest, he can attack the *symptom* of it: these rebellious Parlements he can attack, and perhaps remove. Much is dim to Loménie, but two things are clear: that such Parlementary duel with Royalty is growing perilous, nay internecine; above all, that money must be had. Take thought, brave Loménie; thou Garde-des-Sceaux Lamoignon, who hast ideas! So often defeated, balked cruelly when the golden fruit seemed within clutch, rally for one other struggle. To tame the Parlement, to fill the King's coffers: these are now life-and-death questions.

Parlements have been tamed, more than once. Set to perch 'on the peaks of rocks inaccessible except by litters,' a Parlement grows reasonable. O Maupeou, thou bold bad man, had we left thy work where it was!—But apart from exile, or other violent methods, is there not one method, whereby all things are tamed, even lions? The method of hunger! What if the Parlement's supplies were cut off; namely its Lawsuits!

Minor Courts, for the trying of innumerable minor causes, might be instituted: these we could call *Grand Bailliages.* Whereon the Parlement, shortened of its prey, would look with yellow despair; but the Public, fond of cheap justice, with favour and hope. Then for Finance, for registering of Edicts, why not, from our own Œil-de-Bœuf Dignitaries, our Princes, Dukes, Marshals, make a thing we could call *Plenary Court*; and there, so to speak, do our registering ourselves? Saint Louis had his Plenary Court, of Great Barons;[1] most useful to him: our Great Barons are still here (at least the Name of them is still here); our necessity is greater than his.

Such is the Loménie-Lamoignon device; welcome to the King's Council, as a light-beam in great darkness. The device seems feasible, it is eminently needful: be it once well executed, great deliverance is wrought. Silent, then, and steady; now or never!—the World shall see one other Historical Scene; and so singular a man as Loménie de Brienne still the Stage-manager there.

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[1] Montgaillard, i. 405.

Behold, accordingly, a Home-Secretary Bréteuil 'beautifying Paris,' in the peaceablest manner, in this hopeful spring weather of 1788; the old hovels and hutches disappearing from our Bridges: as if for the State too there were halcyon weather, and nothing to do but beautify. Parlement seems to sit acknowledged victor. Brienne says nothing of Finance; or even says, and prints, that it is all well. How is this; such halcyon quiet; though the Successive Loan did not fill? In a victorious Parlement, Counsellor Goeslard de Monsabert even denounces that 'levying of the Second Twentieth on strict valuation'; and gets decree that the valuation shall not be strict,—not on the Privileged classes. Nevertheless Brienne endures it, launches no Lettre-de-Cachet against it. How is this?

Smiling is such vernal weather; but treacherous, sudden! For one thing, we hear it whispered, 'the Intendants of Provinces have all got order to be at their posts on a certain day.' Still more singular, what incessant Printing is this that goes on at the King's Château, under lock and key? Sentries occupy all gates and windows; the Printers come not out; they sleep in their workrooms; their very food is handed in to them![1] A victorious Parlement smells new danger. D'Espréménil has ordered horses to Versailles; prowls round that guarded Printing-Office; prying, snuffing, if so be the sagacity and ingenuity of man may penetrate it.

To a shower of gold most things are penetrable. D'Espréménil descends on the lap of a Printer's Danaë, in the shape of 'five hundred louis d'or': the Danaë's Husband smuggles a ball of clay to her; which she delivers to the golden Counsellor of Parlement. Kneaded within it, there stick printed proof-sheets:—by Heaven! the royal Edict of that same self-registering *Plenary Court*; of those *Grand Bailliages* that shall cut short our Lawsuits! It is to be promulgated over all France on one and the same day.

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[1] Weber, i. 276.

This, then, is what the Intendants were bid wait for at their posts: this is what the Court sat hatching, as its accursed cockatrice-egg; and would not stir, though provoked, till the brood were out! Hie with it, D'Espréménil, home to Paris; convoke instantaneous Sessions; let the Parlement, and the Earth, and the Heavens know it.

CHAPTER VIII

LOMENIE'S DEATH-THROES

On the morrow, which is the 3d of May 1788, an astonished Parlement sits convoked; listens speechless to the speech of D'Espréménil, unfolding the infinite misdeed. Deed of treachery; of unhallowed darkness, such as Despotism loves! Denounce it, O Parlement of Paris; awaken France and the Universe; roll what thunder-barrels of forensic eloquence thou hast: with thee too it is verily Now or never!

The Parlement is not wanting, at such juncture. In the hour of his extreme jeopardy, the lion first incites himself by roaring, by lashing his sides. So here the Parlement of Paris. On the motion of D'Espréménil, a most patriotic Oath, of the One-and-all sort, is sworn, with united throat;—an excellent new-idea, which, in these coming years, shall not remain unimitated. Next comes indomitable Declaration, almost of the rights of man, at least of the rights of Parlement; Invocation to the friends of French Freedom, in this and in subsequent time. All which, or the essence of all which, is brought to paper; in a tone wherein something of plaintiveness blends with, and tempers, heroic valour. And thus, having sounded the storm-bell,—which Paris hears, which all

France will hear; and hurled such defiance in the teeth of Loménie and Despotism, the Parlement retires as from a tolerable first day's work.

But how Loménie felt to see his cockatrice-egg (so essential to the salvation of France) broken in this premature manner, let readers fancy! Indignant he clutches at his thunderbolts (*de Cachet*, of the Seal); and launches two of them: a bolt for D'Espréménil; a bolt for that busy Goeslard, whose service in the Second Twentieth and 'strict valuation' is not forgotten. Such bolts clutched promptly overnight, and launched with the early new morning, shall strike agitated Paris if not into requiescence, yet into wholesome astonishment.

Ministerial thunderbolts may be launched; but if they do not *hit?* D'Espréménil and Goeslard, warned, both of them, as is thought, by the singing of some friendly bird, elude the Loménie Tipstaves; escape disguised through skywindows, over roofs, to their own Palais de Justice: the thunderbolts have *missed.* Paris (for the buzz flies abroad) is struck into astonishment *not* wholesome. The two Martyrs of Liberty doff their disguises; don their long gowns: behold, in the space of an hour, by aid of ushers and swift runners, the Parlement, with its Counsellors, Presidents, even Peers, sits anew assembled. The assembled Parlement declares that these its two Martyrs cannot be given up, to any sublunary authority; moreover that the 'session is permanent,' admitting of no adjournment, till pursuit of them has been relinquished.

And so, with forensic eloquence, denunciation and protest, with couriers going and returning, the Parlement, in this state of continual explosion that shall cease neither night nor day, waits the issue. Awakened Paris once more inundates those outer courts; boils, in floods wilder than ever, through all avenues. Dissonant hubbub there is; jargon as of Babel, in the hour when they were first smitten (as here) with mutual unintelligibility, and the people had not yet dispersed!

Paris City goes through its diurnal epochs, of working and slumbering; and now, for the second time, most European and African mortals are asleep. But here, in this Whirlpool of Words, sleep falls not; the Night spreads her coverlid of Darkness over it in vain. Within is the sound of mere martyr invincibility; tempered with the due tone of plaintiveness. Without is the infinite expectant hum,—growing drowsier a little. So has it lasted for six-and-thirty hours.

But hark, through the dead of midnight, what tramp is this? Tramp as of armed men, foot and horse; Gardes Françaises, Gardes Suisses: marching hither; in silent regularity; in the flare of torchlight! There are Sappers too, with axes and crowbars: apparently, if the doors open not, they will be forced!—It is Captain D'Agoust, missioned from Versailles. D'Agoust, a man of known firmness;—who once forced Prince Condé himself, by mere incessant looking at him, to give satisfaction and fight:[1] he now, with axes and torches, is advancing on the very sanctuary of Justice. Sacrilegious; yet what help? The man is a soldier; looks merely at his orders; impassive, moves forward like an inanimate engine.

The doors open on summons, there need no axes; door after door. And now the innermost door opens; discloses the long-gowned Senators of France: a hundred and sixty-seven by tale, seventeen of them Peers; sitting there, majestic, 'in permanent session.' Were not the man military, and of cast-iron, this sight, this silence re-echoing the clank of his own boots, might stagger him! For the hundred and sixty-seven receive him in perfect silence; which some liken to that of the Roman Senate overfallen by Brennus; some to that of a nest of coiners surprised by officers of the Police.[2] *Messieurs*, said D'Agoust, *De par le Roi!* Express order has charged D'Agoust with the sad duty of arresting two individuals: M. Duval d'Espréménil and M. Goeslard de Monsabert. Which respectable individuals, as he has not the honour of knowing them, are hereby invited, in the King's name, to surrender themselves.—Profound silence! Buzz, which grows a murmur: 'We are all D'Espréménils!' ventures a voice; which other voices repeat. The President inquires, Whether he will employ violence? Captain D'Agoust, honoured with his Majesty's commission, has to execute his Majesty's order; would so gladly do it without violence, will in any case do it; grants an august Senate space to deliberate which method *they* prefer. And thereupon D'Agoust, with grave military courtesy, has withdrawn for the moment.

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[1] Weber, i. 283.

[2] Besenval, iii. 355.

What boots it, august Senators? All avenues are closed with fixed bayonets. Your Courier gallops to Versailles, through the dewy Night; but also gallops back again, with tidings that the order is authentic, that it is irrevocable. The outer courts simmer with idle population; but D'Agoust's grenadier-ranks stand there as immovable floodgates: there will be no revolting to deliver you. 'Messieurs!' thus spoke D'Espréménil, 'when the victorious Gauls entered Rome, which they had carried by assault, the Roman Senators, clothed in their purple, sat there, in their curule chairs, with a proud and tranquil countenance, awaiting slavery or death. Such too is the lofty spectacle, which you, in this hour, offer to the universe (*à l'univers*), after having generously'—with much more of the like, as can still be read.[1]

In vain, O D'Espréménil! Here is this cast-iron Captain D'Agoust, with his cast-iron military air, come back. Despotism, constraint, destruction sit waving in his plumes. D'Espréménil must fall silent; heroically give himself up, lest worst befall. Him Goeslard heroically imitates. With spoken and speechless emotion, they fling themselves into the arms of their Parlementary brethren, for a last embrace: and so amid plaudits and plaints, from a hundred and sixty-five throats; amid wavings, sobbings, a whole forest-sigh of Parlementary pathos,—they are led through winding passages, to the rear-gate; where, in the grey of the morning, two Coaches with *Exempts* stand waiting. There must the victims mount;

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[1] Toulongeon, i. App. 20.

bayonets menacing behind. D'Espréménil's stern question to the populace, 'Whether they have courage?' is answered by silence. They mount, and roll; and neither the rising of the May sun (it is the 6th morning), nor its setting shall lighten their heart: but they fare forward continually; D'Espréménil towards the utmost Isles of Sainte Marguerite, or Hières (supposed by some, if that is any comfort, to be Calypso's Island); Goeslard towards the land-fortress of Pierre-en-Cize, extant then, near the City of Lyons.

Captain D'Agoust may now therefore look forward to Majorship, to Commandantship of the Tuileries;[1]—and withal vanish from History; where nevertheless he has been fated to do a notable thing. For not only are D'Espréménil and Goeslard safe whirling southward, but the Parlement itself has straightway to march out: to that also his inexorable order reaches. Gathering up their long skirts, they file out, the whole Hundred and Sixty-five of them, through two rows of unsympathetic grenadiers: a spectacle to gods and men. The people revolt not; they only wonder and grumble: also, we remark, these unsympathetic grenadiers are *Gardes Françaises*,—who, one day, will sympathise! In a word, the Palais de Justice is swept clear, the doors of it are locked; and D'Agoust returns to Versailles with the key in his pocket,—having, as was said, merited preferment.

As for this Parlement of Paris, now turned out to the street, we will without reluctance leave it there. The Beds of Justice it had to undergo, in the coming fortnight, at Versailles, in registering, or rather refusing to register, those new-hatched Edicts; and how it assembled in taverns and taprooms there, for the purpose of Protesting;[2] or hovered disconsolate, with outspread skirts, not knowing where to assemble; and was reduced to lodge Protest 'with a Notary'; and in the end, to sit still (in a state of forced 'vacation'), and do nothing: all this, natural now, as the burying of the dead after battle, shall not concern us. The Parlement of

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[1] Montgaillard, i. 404.

[2] Weber, i. 299-303.

Paris has as good as performed its part; doing and misdoing, so far, but hardly further, could it stir the world.

Loménie has removed the evil, then? Not at all: not so much as the symptom of the evil; scarcely the *twelfth* part of the symptom, and exasperated the other eleven! The Intendants of Provinces, the Military Commandants are at their posts, on the appointed 8th of May: but in no Parlement, if not in the single one of Douai, can these new Edicts get registered. Not peaceable signing with ink; but browbeating, bloodshedding, appeal to primary club-law! Against these Bailliages, against this Plenary Court, exasperated Themis everywhere shows face of battle; the Provincial Noblesse are of her party, and whoever hates Loménie and the evil time; with her Attorneys and Tipstaves, she enlists and operates down even to the populace. At Rennes in Brittany, where the historical Bertrand de Moleville is Intendant, it has passed from fatal continual duelling, between the military and gentry, to street-fighting; to stone-volleys and musket-shot: and still the Edicts remain unregistered. The afflicted Bretons send remonstrance to Loménie, by a Deputation of Twelve; whom, however, Loménie, having heard them, shuts up in the Bastille. A second larger Deputation he meets, by his scouts, on the road, and persuades or frightens back. But now a third largest Deputation is indignantly sent by *many* roads: refused audience on arriving, it meets to take counsel; invites Lafayette and all Patriot Bretons in Paris to assist; agitates itself; becomes the *Breton Club*, first germ of—the *Jacobins' Society*.[1]

So many as eight Parlements get exiled:[2] others might need that remedy, but it is one not always easy of appliance. At Grenoble, for instance, where a Mounier, a Barnave have not been idle, the Parlement had due order (by *Lettres-de-*

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[1] A. F. de Bertrand-Moleville, *Mémoires Particuliers* (Paris, 1816), i. ch. i. Marmontel, *Mémoires*, iv. 27.

[2] Montgaillard, i. 308.

Cachet) to depart, and exile itself: but on the morrow, instead of coaches getting yoked, the alarm-bell bursts forth, ominous; and peals and booms all day: crowds of mountaineers rush down, with axes, even with firelocks,—whom (most ominous of all!) the soldiery shows no eagerness to deal with. 'Axe over head,' the poor General has to sign capitulation; to engage that the *Lettres-de-Cachet* shall remain unexecuted, and a beloved Parlement stay where it is. Besançon, Dijon, Rouen, Bordeaux, are not what they should be! At Pau in Bearn, where the old Commandant had failed, the new one (a Grammont, native to them) is met by a Procession of townsmen with the Cradle of Henri Quatre, the Palladium of their Town; is conjured as he venerates this old Tortoise-shell, in which the great Henri was rocked, not to trample on Bearnese liberty; is informed, withal, that his Majesty's cannon are all safe—in the keeping of his Majesty's faithful Burghers of Pau, and do now lie pointed on the walls there; ready for action![1]

At this rate, your Grand Bailliages are like to have a stormy infancy. As for the Plenary Court, it has literally expired in the birth. The very Courtiers looked shy at it; old Marshal Broglie declined the honour of sitting therein. Assaulted by a universal storm of mingled ridicule and execration,[2] this poor Plenary Court met once, and never any second time. Distracted country! Contention hisses up, with forked hydra-tongues, wheresoever poor Loménie sets his foot. 'Let a Commandant, a Commissioner of the King,' says Weber, 'enter one of these Parlements to have an Edict registered, the whole Tribunal will disappear, and leave the Commandant alone with the Clerk and First President. The Edict registered and the Commandant gone, the whole Tribunal hastens back, to declare such registration null. The highways are covered with *Grand Deputations* of Parlements, proceeding to Versailles, to have their registers expunged by the King's hand; or returning home, to cover a new page with a new resolution still more audacious.'[1]

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[1] Besenval, iii. 348.

[2] *La Cour Plénière*, héroï-tragi-comédie en trois actes et en prose; jouée le 14 Juillet 1788, par une société d'amateurs dans un Château aux environs de Versailles; par M. l'Abbé de Vermond, Lecteur de la Reine: A Bâville (*Lamoignon's Country-house*), et se trouve à Paris, chez la Veuve Liberté, à l'enseigne de la Révolution, 1788.—*La Passion, la Mort et la Résurrection du Peuple*: Imprimé à Jerusalem, etc. etc.—See Montgaillard, i. 407.

Such is the France of this year 1788. Not now a Golden or Paper Age of Hope; with its horse-racings, balloon-flyings, and finer sensibilities of the heart: ah, gone is that; its golden effulgence paled, bedarkened in *this* singular manner,—brewing towards preternatural weather! For, as in that wreck-storm of *Paul et Virginie* and Saint-Pierre,—'One huge motionless cloud' (say, of Sorrow and Indignation) 'girdles our whole horizon; streams up, hairy, copper-edged, over a sky of the colour of lead.' Motionless itself; but 'small clouds' (as exiled Parlements and suchlike), 'parting from it, fly over the zenith, with the velocity of birds':—till at last, with one loud howl, the whole Four Winds be dashed together, and all the world exclaim, There is the tornado! *Tout le monde s'écria, Voilà l'ouragan!*

For the rest, in such circumstances, the Successive Loan, very naturally, remains unfilled; neither, indeed, can that impost of the Second Twentieth, at least not on 'strict valuation,' be levied to good purpose: 'Lenders,' says Weber, in his hysterical vehement manner, 'are afraid of ruin; tax-gatherers of hanging.' The very Clergy turn away their face: convoked in Extraordinary Assembly, they afford no gratuitous gift (*don gratuit*),—if it be not that of advice; here too instead of cash is clamour for States-General.[2]

O Loménie-Brienne, with thy poor flimsy mind all bewildered, and now 'three actual cauteries' on thy worn-out body; who art like to die of inflammation, provocation, milk-diet, *dartres vives* and *maladie*—(best untranslated);[3] and presidest over a France with innumerable *actual cauteries*, which also is dying of inflammation and the rest! Was it wise to quit the bosky verdures of Brienne, and thy new ashlar Château there, and what it held, for *this?* Soft were those shades and lawns; sweet the hymns of Poetasters, the blandishments of high-rouged Graces:[1] and always this and the other Philosophe Morellet (nothing deeming himself or thee a questionable Sham-Priest) could be so happy in making happy:—and also (hadst thou known it), in the Military School hard by, there sat, studying mathematics, a dusky-complexioned taciturn Boy, under the name of: NAPOLEON BONAPARTE!—With fifty years of effort, and one final dead-lift struggle, thou hast made an exchange! Thou hast got thy robe of office,—as Hercules had his Nessus'-shirt.

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[1] Weber, i. 275.

[2] Lameth, *Assemb. Const.* (Introd.) p. 87.

[3] Montgaillard, i. 424.

On the 13th of July of this 1788, there fell, on the very edge of harvest, the most frightful hailstorm; scattering into wild waste the Fruits of the Year; which had otherwise suffered grievously by drought. For sixty leagues round Paris especially, the ruin was almost total.[2] To so many other evils, then, there is to be added, that of dearth, perhaps of famine.

Some days before this hailstorm, on the 5th of July; and still more decisively some days after it, on the 8th of August,—Loménie announces that the States-General are actually to meet in the following month of May. Till after which period, this of the Plenary Court, and the rest, shall remain *postponed.* Further, as in Loménie there is no plan of forming or holding these most desirable States-General, 'thinkers are invited' to furnish him with one,—through the medium of discussion by the public press!

What could a poor Minister do? There are still ten months of respite reserved: a sinking pilot will fling out all things, his very biscuit-bags, lead, log, compass and quadrant, before flinging out *himself.* It is on this principle, of sinking, and the incipient delirium of despair, that we explain likewise the almost miraculous 'invitation to thinkers.' Invitation to Chaos to be so kind as build, out of its tumultuous drift-wood, an Ark of Escape for him! In these cases, not invitation but command has usually proved serviceable.—The Queen stood, that evening, pensive, in a window, with her face turned towards the Garden. The *Chef de Gobelet* had followed her with an obsequious cup of coffee; and then retired till it were sipped. Her Majesty beckoned Dame Campan to approach: '*Grand Dieu!*' murmured she, with the cup in her hand, 'what a piece of news will be made public to-day! The King grants States-General.' Then raising her eyes to Heaven (if Campan were not mistaken), she added: ''Tis a first beat of the drum, of ill-omen for France. This Noblesse will ruin us.'[1]

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[1] See *Mémoires de Morellet.*

[2] Marmontel, iv. 30.

During all that hatching of the Plenary Court, while Lamoignon looked so mysterious, Besenval had kept asking him one question: Whether they had cash? To which as Lamoignon always answered (on the faith of Loménie) that the cash was safe, judicious Besenval rejoined that then all was safe. Nevertheless, the melancholy fact is, that the royal coffers are almost getting literally void of coin. Indeed, apart from all other things, this 'invitation to thinkers,' and the great change now at hand are enough to 'arrest the circulation of capital,' and forward only that of pamphlets. A few thousand gold louis are now all of money or money's worth that remains in the King's Treasury. With another movement as of desperation, Loménie invites Necker to come and be Controller of Finances! Necker has other work in view than controlling Finances for Loménie: with a dry refusal he stands taciturn; awaiting his time.

What shall a desperate Prime Minister do? He has grasped at the strongbox of the King's Theatre: some Lottery had been set on foot for those sufferers by the hailstorm; in his extreme necessity, Loménie lays hands even on this.[2] To make provision for the passing day, on any terms, will soon be impossible.—On the 16th of August, poor Weber heard, at Paris and Versailles, hawkers, 'with a hoarse stifled tone of voice (*voix étouffée, sourde*),' drawling and snuffling, through the streets, an *Edict concerning Payments* (such was the soft title Rivarol had contrived for it): all Payments at the Royal Treasury shall be made henceforth, three-fifths in Cash, and the remaining two-fifths—in Paper bearing interest! Poor Weber almost swooned at the sound of these cracked voices, with their bodeful raven-note; and will never forget the effect it had on him.[1]

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[1] Campan, iii. 104, 111.

[2] Besenval, iii. 360.

But the effect on Paris, on the world generally? From the dens of Stock-brokerage, from the heights of Political Economy, of Neckerism and Philosophism; from all articulate and inarticulate throats, rise hootings and howlings, such as ear had not yet heard. Sedition itself may be imminent! Monseigneur d'Artois, moved by Duchess Polignac, feels called to wait upon her Majesty, and explain frankly what crisis matters stand in. 'The Queen wept'; Brienne himself wept;—for it is now visible and palpable that he must go.

Remains only that the Court, to whom his manners and garrulities were always agreeable, shall make his fall soft. The grasping old man has already got his Archbishopship of Toulouse exchanged for the richer one of Sens: and now, in this hour of pity, he shall have the Coadjutorship for his nephew (hardly yet of due age); a Dameship of the Palace for his niece; a Regiment for her husband; for himself a red Cardinal's-hat, a *Coupe de Bois* (cutting from the royal forests), and on the whole 'from five to six hundred thousand livres of revenue':[2] finally, his Brother, the Comte de Brienne, shall still continue War-minister. Buckled-round with such bolsters and huge featherbeds of Promotion, let him now fall as soft as he can!

And so Loménie departs: rich if Court-titles and Money-bonds can enrich him; but if these cannot, perhaps the poorest of all extant men. 'Hissed at by the people of

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[1] Weber, i. 339.

[2] *Ibid.* i. 341.

Versailles,' he drives forth to Jardi; southward to Brienne,—for recovery of health. Then to Nice, to Italy; but shall return; shall glide to and fro, tremulous, faint-twinkling, fallen on awful times: till the Guillotine—snuff out his weak existence? Alas, worse: for it is *blown* out, or choked out, foully, pitiably, on the way to the Guillotine! In his Palace of Sens, rude Jacobin Bailiffs made him drink with them from his own wine-cellars, feast with them from his own larder; and on the morrow morning, the miserable old man lies dead. This is the end of Prime Minister, Cardinal Archbishop Loménie de Brienne. Flimsier mortal was seldom fated to do as weighty a mischief; to have a life as despicable-envied, an exit as frightful. *Fired*, as the phrase is, with ambition: blown, like a kindled rag, the sport of winds, not this way, not that way, but of all ways, straight towards *such* a powder-mine,—which he kindled! Let us pity the hapless Loménie; and forgive him; and, as soon as possible, forget him.

CHAPTER IX

BURIAL WITH BONFIRE

BESENVAL, during these extraordinary operations, of Payment two-fifths in Paper, and change of Prime Minister, had been out on a tour through his District of Command; and indeed, for the last months, peacefully drinking the waters of Contrexéville. Returning now, in the end of August, towards Moulins, and 'knowing nothing,' he arrives one evening at Langres; finds the whole Town in a state of uproar (*grande rumeur*). Doubtless some sedition; a thing too common in these days! He alights nevertheless; inquires of a 'man tolerably dressed,' what the matter is?—'How?' answers the man, 'you have not heard the news? The Archbishop is thrown out, and M. Necker is recalled; and all is going to go well!'[1]

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[1] Besenval, iii. 366.

Such *rumeur* and vociferous acclaim has risen round M. Necker, ever from 'that day when he issued from the Queen's Apartments,' a nominated Minister. It was on the 24th of August: 'the galleries of the Château, the courts, the streets of Versailles; in few hours, the Capital; and, as the news flew, all France, resounded with the cry of *Vive le Roi! Vive M. Necker!*'[1] In Paris indeed it unfortunately got the length of 'turbulence.' Petards, rockets go off, in the Place Dauphine, more than enough. A 'wicker figure (*Mannequin d'osier*),' in Archbishop's stole, made emblematically, three-fifths of it satin, two-fifths of it paper, is promenaded, not in silence, to the popular judgment-bar; is doomed; shriven by a mock Abbé de Vermond; then solemnly consumed by fire, at the foot of Henri's Statue on the Pont Neuf;—with such petarding and huzzaing that Chevalier Dubois and his City-watch see good finally to make a charge (more or less ineffectual); and there wanted not burning of sentry-boxes, forcing of guard-houses, and also 'dead bodies thrown into the Seine over-night,' to avoid new effervescence.[2]

Parlements therefore shall return from exile: Plenary Court, Payment two-fifths in Paper have vanished; gone off in smoke, at the foot of Henri's Statue. States-General (with a Political Millennium) are now certain; nay, it shall be announced, in our fond haste, for January next: and all, as the Langres man said, is 'going to go.'

To the prophetic glance of Besenval, one other thing is too apparent: that Friend Lamoignon cannot keep his Keepership. Neither he nor War-minister Comte de Brienne! Already old Foulon, with an eye to be war-minister himself, is making underground movements. This is that same Foulon named *âme damnée du Parlement*; a man grown grey in treachery, in griping, projecting, intriguing and iniquity:

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[1] Weber, i. 342.

[2] *Histoire Parlementaire de la Révolution Française; ou Journal des Assemblées Nationales depuis* 1789 (Paris, 1833 et seqq.), i. 253. Lameth, *Assemblée Constituante*, i. (Introd.) p. 89.

who once when it was objected, to some finance-scheme of his, 'What will the people do?'—made answer, in the fire of discussion, 'The people may eat grass': hasty words, which fly abroad irrevocable,—and will send back tidings!

Foulon, to the relief of the world, fails on this occasion; and will always fail. Nevertheless it steads not M. de Lamoignon. It steads not the doomed man that he have interviews with the King; and be 'seen to return *radieux*,' emitting *rays*. Lamoignon is the hated of Parlements: Comte de Brienne is Brother to the Cardinal Archbishop. The 24th of August has been; and the 14th September is not yet, when they two, as their great Principal had done, descend,—made to fall *soft*, like him.

And now, as if the last burden had been rolled from its heart, and assurance were at length perfect, Paris bursts forth anew into extreme jubilee. The Basoche rejoices aloud, that the foe of Parlements is fallen; Nobility, Gentry, Commonalty have rejoiced; and rejoice. Nay now, with new emphasis, Rascality itself, starting suddenly from its dim depths, will arise and do it,—for down even thither the new Political Evangel, in some rude version or other, has penetrated. It is Monday, the 14th of September 1788: Rascality assembles anew, in great force, in the Place Dauphine; lets off petards, fires blunderbusses, to an incredible extent, without interval, for eighteen hours. There is again a wicker figure, '*Mannequin* of osier': the centre of endless howlings. Also Necker's Portrait snatched, or purchased, from some Printshop, is borne processionally, aloft on a perch, with huzzas;—an example to be remembered.

But chiefly on the Pont Neuf, where the Great Henri, in bronze, rides sublime; there do the crowds gather. All passengers must stop, till they have bowed to the People's King, and said audibly: *Vive Henri Quatre; au diable Lamoignon!* No carriage but must stop; not even that of his Highness d'Orléans. Your coach-doors are opened:

Monsieur will please to put forth his head and bow; or even, if refractory, to alight altogether, and kneel: from Madame a wave of her plumes, a smile of her fair face, there where she sits, shall suffice:—and surely a coin or two (to buy *fusées*) were not unreasonable, from the Upper Classes, friends of Liberty? In this manner it proceeds for days; in such rude horse-play,—not without kicks. The City-watch can do nothing; hardly save its own skin: for the last twelvemonth, as we have sometimes seen, it has been a kind of pastime to *hunt* the Watch. Besenval indeed is at hand with soldiers; but they have orders to avoid firing, and are not prompt to stir.

On Monday morning the explosion of petards began: and now it is near midnight of Wednesday; and the 'wicker *Mannequin*' is to be buried,—apparently in the Antique fashion. Long rows of torches, following it, move towards the Hôtel Lamoignon; but 'a servant of mine' (Besenval's) has run to give warning, and there are soldiers come. Gloomy Lamoignon is not to die by conflagration, or this night;—not yet for a year, and then by gunshot (suicidal or accidental is unknown).[1] Foiled Rascality burns its 'Mannikin of osier,' under his windows; 'tears up the sentry-box,' and rolls off: to try Brienne; to try Dubois Captain of the Watch. Now, however, all is bestirring itself; Gardes Françaises, Invalides, Horse-patrol: the Torch Procession is met with sharp shot, with the thrusting of bayonets, the slashing of sabres. Even Dubois makes a charge, with that Cavalry of his, and the cruelest charge of all: 'there are a great many killed and wounded.' Not without clangour, complaint; subsequent criminal trials, and official persons dying of heartbreak![2] So, however, with steel-besom, Rascality is brushed back into its dim depths, and the streets are swept clear.

Not for a century and half had Rascality ventured to step forth in this fashion; not for so long, showed its huge rude lineaments in the light of day. A Wonder and new Thing: as yet gamboling merely, in awkward Brobdingnag sport, not without quaintness; hardly in anger: yet in its huge half-vacant laugh lurks a shade of grimness,—which could unfold itself!

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[1] *Histoire de la Révolution*, par Deux Amis de la Liberté, i. 50.

[2] *Ibid.* i. 58.

However, the thinkers invited by Loménie are now far on with their pamphlets: States-General, on one plan or another, will infallibly meet; if not in January, as was once hoped, yet at latest in May. Old Duke de Richelieu, moribund in these autumn days, opens his eyes once more, murmuring, 'What would Louis Fourteenth' (whom he remembers) 'have said!' —then closes them again, for ever, before the evil time.

BOOK FOURTH

STATES-GENERAL

CHAPTER I

THE NOTABLES AGAIN

THE universal prayer, therefore, is to be fulfilled! Always in days of national perplexity, when wrong abounded and help was not, this remedy of States-General was called for; by a Malesherbes, nay by a Fénelon;[1] even Parlements calling for it were 'escorted with blessings.' And now behold it is vouchsafed us; States-General shall verily be!

To say, let States-General be, was easy; to say in what manner they shall be, is not so easy. Since the year 1614, there have no States-General met in France, all trace of them has vanished from the living habits of men. Their structure, powers, methods of procedure, which were never in any measure fixed, have now become wholly a vague possibility. Clay which the potter may shape, this way or that:—say rather, the twenty-five millions of potters; for so many have now, more or less, a vote in it! How to shape the States-General? There is a problem. Each Body-corporate, each privileged, each organised Class has secret hopes of its own in that matter; and also secret misgivings of its own,—for, behold, this monstrous twenty-million Class, hitherto the dumb sheep which these others had to agree about the manner of shearing, is now also arising with hopes! It has ceased or is ceasing to be dumb; it speaks through Pamphlets, or at least brays and growls behind them, in unison,—increasing wonderfully their volume of sound.

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[1] Montgaillard, i. 461.

As for the Parlement of Paris, it has at once declared for the 'old form of 1614.' Which form had this advantage, that the *Tiers État*, Third Estate, or Commons, figured there as a show mainly: whereby the Noblesse and Clergy had but to avoid quarrel between themselves, and decide unobstructed what *they* thought best. Such was the clearly declared opinion of the Paris Parlement. But, being met by a storm of mere hooting and howling from all men, such opinion was blown straightway to the winds; and the popularity of the Parlement along with it,—never to return. The Parlement's part, we said above, was as good as played. Concerning which, however, there is this further to be noted: the proximity of dates. It was on the 22d of September that the Parlement returned from 'vacation' or 'exile in its estates'; to be reinstalled amid boundless jubilee from all Paris. Precisely next day it was, that this same Parlement came to its 'clearly declared opinion': and then on the morrow after that, you behold it 'covered with outrages'; its outer court, one vast sibilation, and the glory departed from it for evermore.[1] A popularity of twenty-four hours was, in those times, no uncommon allowance.

On the other hand, how superfluous was that invitation of Loménie's: the invitation to thinkers! Thinkers and unthinkers, by the million, are spontaneously at their post, doing what is in them. Clubs labour: *Société Publicole*; Breton Club; Enraged Club, *Club des Enragés*. Likewise Dinner-parties in the Palais Royal; your Mirabeaus, Talleyrands dining there, in company with Chamforts, Morellets, with Duponts and hot Parlementeers, not without object! For a certain *Necker*ean Lion's-provider, whom one could name, assembles them there;[2]—or even their own private determination to have dinner does it. And then as to

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[1] Weber, i. 347.

[2] *Ibid.* i. 360.

Pamphlets—in figurative language, 'it is a sheer snowing of pamphlets; like to snow-up the Government thoroughfares!' Now is the time for Friends of Freedom; sane, and even insane.

Count, or self-styled Count, d'Aintrigues, 'the young Languedocian gentleman,' with perhaps Chamfort the Cynic to help him, rises into furor almost Pythic; highest, where many are high.[1] Foolish young Languedocian gentleman; who himself so soon, 'emigrating among the foremost,' has to fly indignant over the marches, with the *Contrat Social* in his pocket,—towards outer darkness, thankless intriguings, *ignis-fatuus* hoverings, and death by the stiletto! Abbé Sieyes has left Chartres Cathedral, and canonry and bookshelves there; has let his tonsure grow, and come to Paris with a secular head, of the most irrefragable sort, to ask three questions, and answer them: *What is the Third Estate? All.—What has it hitherto been in our form of government? Nothing.—What does it want? To become Something.*

D'Orléans,—for be sure he, on his way to Chaos, is in the thick of this,—promulgates his *Deliberations*;[2] fathered by him, written by Laclos of the *Liaisons Dangereuses.* The result of which comes out simply: 'The Third Estate is the Nation.' On the other hand, Monseigneur d'Artois, with other Princes of the Blood, publishes, in solemn *Memorial* to the King, that if such things be listened to, Privilege, Nobility, Monarchy, Church, State and Strongbox are in danger.[3] In danger truly: and yet if you do not listen, are they out of danger? It is the voice of all France, this sound that rises. Immeasurable, manifold; as the sound of outbreaking waters: wise were he who knew what to do in it,—if not to fly to the mountains, and hide himself?

How an ideal, all-seeing Versailles Government, sitting there on such principles, in such an environment, would have determined to demean itself at this new juncture, may even yet be a question. Such a Government would have felt too well that its long task was now drawing to a close; that, under the guise of these States-General, at length inevitable, a new omnipotent Unknown of Democracy was coming into being; in presence of which no Versailles Government either could or should, except in a provisory character, continue extant. To enact which provisory character, so unspeakably important, might its whole faculties but have sufficed; and so a peaceable, gradual, well-conducted Abdication and *Domine-dimittas* have been the issue!

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[1] *Mémoire sur les États-Généraux.* See Montgaillard, i. 457-9.

[2] *Délibérations à prendre pour les Assemblées des Bailliages.*

[3] *Mémoire présenté au Roi*, par Monseigneur Comte d'Artois, M. le Prince de Condé, M. le Duc de Bourbon, M. le Duc d'Enghien, et M. le Prince de Conti. (Given in *Hist. Parl.* i. 256.)

This for our ideal, all-seeing Versailles Government. But for the actual irrational Versailles Government? Alas, that is a Government existing there only for its own behoof: without right, except possession; and now also without might. It foresees nothing, sees nothing; has not so much as a purpose, but has only purposes,—and the instinct whereby all that exists will struggle to keep existing. Wholly a vortex; in which vain counsels, hallucinations, falsehoods, intrigues, and imbecilities whirl; like withered rubbish in the meeting of winds! The Œil-de-Bœuf has its irrational hopes, if also its fears. Since hitherto all States-General have done as good as nothing, why should these do more? The Commons, indeed, look dangerous; but on the whole is not revolt, unknown now for five generations, an impossibility? The Three Estates can, by management, be set against each other; the Third will, as heretofore, join with the King; will, out of mere spite and self-interest, be eager to tax and vex the other two. The other two are thus delivered bound into our hands, that we may fleece them likewise. Whereupon, money being got, and the Three Estates all in quarrel, dismiss them, and let the future go as it can! As good Archbishop Loménie was wont to say: 'There are so many accidents; and it needs but one to save us.'—Yes; and how many to destroy us?

Poor Necker in the midst of such an anarchy does what is possible for him. He looks into it with obstinately hopeful face; lauds the known rectitude of the kingly mind; listens indulgentlike to the known perverseness of the queenly and courtly;—emits if any proclamation or regulation, one favouring the *Tiers État*; but settling nothing; hovering afar off rather, and advising all things to settle themselves. The grand questions, for the present, have got reduced to two: the Double Representation, and the Vote by Head. Shall the Commons have a 'double representation,' that is to say, have as many members as the Noblesse and Clergy united? Shall the States-General, when once assembled, vote and deliberate, in one body, or in three separate bodies; 'vote by head, or vote by class,'—*ordre* as they call it? These are the moot-points now filling all France with jargon, logic and eleutheromania. To terminate which, Necker bethinks him, Might not a second Convocation of the Notables be fittest? Such second Convocation is resolved on.

On the 6th of November of this year 1788, these Notables accordingly have reassembled; after an interval of some eighteen months. They are Calonne's old Notables, the same Hundred and Forty-four,—to show one's impartiality; likewise to save time. They sit there once again, in their Seven Bureaus, in the hard winter weather. it is the hardest winter seen since 1709; thermometer below zero of Fahrenheit, Seine River frozen over.[1] Cold, scarcity and eleutheromaniac clamour: a changed world since these Notables were 'organed out,' in May gone a year! They shall see now whether, under their Seven Princes of the Blood, in their Seven Bureaus, they can settle the moot-points.

To the surprise of Patriotism, these Notables, once so patriotic, seem to incline the wrong way; towards the anti-patriotic side. They stagger at the Double Representation, at the Vote by Head: there is not affirmative decision; there is mere debating, and that not with the best aspects. For, indeed, were not these Notables themselves mostly of the Privileged Classes? They clamoured once; now they have their misgivings; make their dolorous representations. Let them vanish, ineffectual; and return no more! They vanish, after a month's session, on this 12th of December, year 1788: the *last* terrestrial Notables; not to reappear any other time, in the History of the World.

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[1] Marmontel, *Mémoires* (London, 1805), iv. 33. *Hist. Parl.* etc.

And so, the clamour still continuing, and the Pamphlets; and nothing but patriotic Addresses, louder and louder, pouring in on us from all corners of France,—Necker himself some fortnight after, before the year is yet done, has to present his *Report*;[1] recommending at his own risk that same Double Representation; nay almost enjoining it, so loud is the jargon and eleutheromania. What dubitating, what circumambulating! These whole six noisy months (for it began with Brienne in July), has not *Report* followed *Report*, and one Proclamation flown in the teeth of the other?[2]

However, that first moot-point, as we see, is now settled. As for the second, that of voting by Head or by Order, it unfortunately is still left hanging. It hangs there, we may say, between the Privileged Orders and the Unprivileged; as a ready-made battle-prize, and necessity of war, from the very first: which battle-prize whosoever seizes it—may thenceforth bear as battle-flag, with the best omens!

But so, at least, by Royal Edict of the 24th of January,[3] does it finally, to impatient expectant France, become not only indubitable that National Deputies *are* to meet, but possible (so far and hardly farther has the royal Regulation gone) to begin electing them.

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[1] *Rapport fait au Roi dans son Conseil, le 27 Décembre* 1788.

[2] 5th July; 8th August; 23d September, etc. etc.

[3] *Réglement du Roi pour la Convocation des États-Généraux à Versailles.* (Reprinted, wrong dated, in *Histoire Parlementaire*, i. 262.)

CHAPTER II

THE ELECTION

Up, then, and be doing! The royal signal-word flies through France, as through vast forests the rushing of a mighty wind. At Parish Churches, in Townhalls, and every House of Convocation; by Bailliages, by Seneschalsies, in whatsoever form men convene; there, with confusion enough, are Primary Assemblies forming. To elect your Electors; such is the form prescribed: then to draw up your 'Writ of Plaints and Grievances (*Cahier de plaintes et doléances*),' of which latter there is no lack.

With such virtue works this Royal January Edict; as it rolls rapidly, in its leathern mails, along these frostbound highways, towards all the four winds. Like some *fiat*, or magic spell-word;—which such things do resemble! For always, as it sounds out 'at the market-cross,' accompanied with trumpet-blast; presided by Bailli, Seneschal, or other minor Functionary, with beef-eaters; or, in country churches, is droned forth after sermon, '*au prône des messes paroissales*'; and is registered, posted and let fly over all the world,—you behold how this multitudinous French People, so long simmering and buzzing in eager expectancy, begins heaping and shaping itself into organic groups. Which organic groups, again, hold smaller organic grouplets: the inarticulate buzzing becomes articulate speaking and acting. By Primary Assembly, and then by Secondary; by 'successive elections,' and infinite elaboration and scrutiny, according to prescribed process,—shall the genuine 'Plaints and Grievances' be at length got to paper; shall the fit National Representative be at length laid hold of.

How the whole People shakes itself, as if it had one life; and, in thousand-voiced rumour, announces that it is awake, suddenly out of long death-sleep, and will thenceforth sleep no more! The long looked-for has come at last; wondrous news, of Victory, Deliverance, Enfranchisement, sounds magical through every heart. To the proud strong man it has come; whose strong hands shall no more be gyved; to whom boundless unconquered continents lie disclosed. The weary day-drudge has heard of it; the beggar with his crust moistened in tears. What! To us also has hope reached; down even to us? Hunger and hardship are not to be eternal? The bread we extorted from the rugged glebe, and, with the toil of our sinews, reaped and ground, and kneaded into loaves, was not wholly for another, then; but we also shall eat of it, and be filled? Glorious news (answer the prudent elders), but all-too unlikely!—Thus, at any rate, may the lower people, who pay no money-taxes and have no right to vote,[1] assiduously crowd round those that do; and most Halls of Assembly, within doors and without, seem animated enough.

Paris, alone of Towns, is to have Representatives; the number of them twenty. Paris is divided into Sixty Districts; each of which (assembled in some church, or the like) is choosing two Electors. Official deputations pass from District to District, for all is inexperience as yet, and there is endless consulting. The streets swarm strangely with busy crowds, pacific yet restless and loquacious; at intervals, is seen the gleam of military muskets; especially about the Palais, where the Parlement, once more on duty, sits querulous, almost tremulous.

Busy is the French world! In those great days, what poorest speculative craftsman but will leave his workshop; if not to vote, yet to assist in voting? On all highways is a rustling and bustling. Over the wide surface of France, ever and anon, through the spring months, as the Sower casts his corn abroad upon the furrows, sounds of congregating and dispersing; of crowds in deliberation, acclamation, voting by ballot and by voice,—rise discrepant towards the ear of Heaven. To which political phenomena add this economical one, that Trade is stagnant, and also Bread getting dear; for before the rigorous winter there was, as we said, a rigorous summer, with drought, and on the 13th of July with destructive hail. What a fearful day! all cried while that tempest fell. Alas, the next anniversary of it will be a worse.[1] Under such aspects is France electing National Representatives.

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[1] *Réglement du Roi* (in *Histoire Parlementaire*, as above, i. 267-307).

The incidents and specialties of these Elections belong not to Universal, but to Local or Parish History: for which reason let not the new troubles of Grenoble or Besançon; the bloodshed on the streets of Rennes, and consequent march thither of the Breton 'Young Men' with Manifesto by their 'Mothers, Sisters, and Sweethearts';[2] nor suchlike, detain us here. It is the same sad history everywhere; with superficial variations. A reinstated Parlement (as at Besançon), which stands astonished at this Behemoth of a States-General it had itself evoked, starts forward, with more or less audacity, to fix a thorn in its nose; and, alas, is instantaneously struck down, and hurled quite out,—for the new popular force can use not only arguments but brickbats! Or else, and perhaps combined with this, it is an order of Noblesse (as in Brittany), which will beforehand tie up the Third Estate, that it harm not the old privileges. In which act of tying up, never so skilfully set about, there is likewise no possibility of prospering; but the Behemoth-Briareus snaps your cords like green rushes. Tie up? Alas, Messieurs! And then, as for your chivalry rapiers, valour and wager-of-battle, think one moment, how can that answer? The plebeian heart too has red life in it, which changes not to paleness at glance even of you; and 'the six hundred Breton gentlemen assembled in arms, for seventy-two hours, in the Cordeliers' Cloister, at Rennes,'—have to come out again, *wiser* than they entered. For the Nantes Youth, the Angers Youth, all Brittany was astir; 'mothers, sisters, and sweethearts' shrieking after them, *March*! The Breton Noblesse must even let the mad world have its way.[1]

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[1] Bailly, *Mémoires*, i. 336.

[2] *Protestation et Arrêté des Jeunes Gens de la Ville de Nantes, du* 28 *Janvier* 1789, *avant leur départ pour Rennes. Arrêté des Jeunes Gens de la Ville d'Angers, du* 4 *Février* 1789. *Arrêté des Mères, Sœurs, Epouses et Amantes des Jeunes Citoyens d'Angers, du* 6 *Février* 1789. (Reprinted in *Histoire Parlementaire*, i. 290-93.)

In other Provinces, the Noblesse, with equal goodwill, finds it better to stick to Protests, to well-redacted '*Cahiers* of grievances,' and satirical writings and speeches. Such is partially their course in Provence; whither indeed Gabriel Honoré Riquetti Comte de Mirabeau has rushed down from Paris, to speak a word in season. In Provence, the Privileged, backed by their Aix Parlement, discover that such novelties, enjoined though they be by Royal Edict, tend to National detriment; and what is still more indisputable, 'to impair the dignity of the Noblesse.' Whereupon Mirabeau protesting aloud, this same Noblesse, amid huge tumult within doors and without, flatly determines to expel him from their Assembly. No other method, not even that of successive duels, would answer with him, the obstreperous fierce-glaring man. Expelled he accordingly is.

'In all countries, in all times,' exclaims he departing, 'the Aristocrats have implacably pursued every friend of the People; and with tenfold implacability, if such a one were himself born of the Aristocracy. It was thus that the last of the Gracchi perished, by the hands of the Patricians. But he, being struck with the mortal stab, flung dust towards heaven, and called on the Avenging Deities; and from this dust there was born Marius,—Marius not so illustrious for exterminating the Cimbri, as for overturning in Rome the tyranny of the Nobles.'[2] Casting up *which* new curious handful of dust (through the Printing-press), to breed what it can and may, Mirabeau stalks forth into the Third Estate.

That he now, to ingratiate himself with this Third Estate, 'opened a cloth-shop in Marseilles,' and for moments became a furnishing tailor, or even the fable that he did so, is to us always among the pleasant memorabilities of this era. Stranger Clothier never wielded the ell-wand, and rent webs for men, or fractional parts of men. The *Fils Adoptif* is indignant at such disparaging fable,[1]—which nevertheless was widely believed in those days.[2] But indeed, if Achilles, in the heroic ages, killed mutton, why should not Mirabeau, in the unheroic ones, measure broadcloth?

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[1] *Hist. Parl.* i. 287. *Deux Amis de la Liberté*, i. 105-128.

[2] *Fils Adoptif*, v. 256.

More authentic are his triumph-progresses through that disturbed district, with mob jubilee, flaming torches, 'windows hired for two louis,' and voluntary guard of a hundred men. He is Deputy Elect, both of Aix and of Marseilles; but will prefer Aix. He has opened his far-sounding voice, the depths of his far-sounding soul; he can quell (such virtue is in a spoken word) the pride-tumults of the rich, the hunger-tumults of the poor; and wild multitudes move under him, as under the moon do billows of the sea: he has become a world-compeller, and ruler over men.

One other incident and specialty we note; with how different an interest! It is of the Parlement of Paris; which starts forward, like the others (only with less audacity, seeing better how it lay), to nose-ring that Behemoth of a States-General. Worthy Doctor Guillotin, respectable practitioner in Paris, has drawn up his little 'Plan of a *Cahier* of *doléances*';—as had he not, having the wish and gift, the clearest liberty to do? He is getting the people to sign it; whereupon the surly Parlement summons him to give account of himself. He goes; but with all Paris at his heels; which floods the outer courts, and copiously signs the *Cahier* even there, while the Doctor is giving account of himself within! The Parlement cannot too soon dismiss Guillotin, with compliments; to be borne home shoulder-high.[3] This respectable Guillotin we hope to behold once more, and perhaps only once; the Parlement not even once, but let it be engulfed unseen by us.

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[1] *Mémoires de Mirabeau*, v. 307.

[2] Marat, *Ami-du-Peuple* Newspaper (in *Histoire Parlementaire*, ii. 103), etc.

[3] *Deux Amis de la Liberté*, i. 141.

Meanwhile such things, cheering as they are, tend little to cheer the national creditor, or indeed the creditor of any kind. In the midst of universal portentous doubt, what certainty can seem so certain as money in the purse, and the wisdom of keeping it there? Trading Speculation, Commerce of all kinds, has as far as possible come to a dead pause; and the hand of the industrious lies idle in his bosom. Frightful enough, when now the rigour of seasons has also done its part, and to scarcity of work is added scarcity of food! In the opening spring, there come rumours of forestalment, there come King's Edicts, Petitions of bakers against millers; and at length, in the month of April,—troops of ragged Lackalls, and fierce cries of starvation! These are the thrice-famed *Brigands*: an actual existing quotity of persons; who, long reflected and reverberated through so many millions of heads, as in concave multiplying mirrors, become a whole Brigand World; and, like a kind of Supernatural Machinery, wondrously move the Epos of the Revolution. The Brigands are here; the Brigands are there; the Brigands are coming! Not otherwise sounded the clang of Phœbus Apollo's silver bow, scattering pestilence and pale terror. for this clang too was of the imagination; preternatural; and it too walked in formless immeasurability, *having made itself like to the Night* (*νυκτὶ ἐοικώς*)!

But remark at least, for the first time, the singular empire of Suspicion, in those lands, in those days. If poor famishing men shall, prior to death, gather in groups and crowds, as the poor fieldfares and plovers do in bitter weather, were it but that they may chirp mournfully together, and misery look in the eyes of misery; if famishing men (what famishing fieldfares cannot do) should discover, once congregated, that they need not die while food is in the land, since they are many, and with empty wallets have right hands: in all this, what need were there of Preternatural Machinery? To most people none; but not to French people, in a time of Revolution. These Brigands (as Turgot's also were, fourteen years ago) have all been set on; enlisted, though without tap of drum,—by Aristocrats, by Democrats, by D'Orléans, D'Artois, and enemies of the public weal. Nay Historians, to this day, will prove it by one argument: these Brigands, pretending to have no victual, nevertheless contrive to drink, nay have been seen drunk.[1] An unexampled fact! But on the whole, may we not predict that a people, with such a width of Credulity and of Incredulity (the proper union of which makes Suspicion, and indeed unreason generally), will see Shapes enough of Immortals fighting in its battle-ranks, and never want for Epical Machinery?

Be this as it may, the Brigands are clearly got to Paris, in considerable multitudes:[2] with sallow faces, lank hair (the true enthusiast complexion), with sooty rags; and also with large clubs, which they smite angrily against the pavement! These mingle in the Election tumult; would fain sign Guillotin's *Cahier*, or any *Cahier* or Petition whatsoever, could they but write. Their enthusiast complexion, the smiting of their sticks bodes little good to any one; least of all to rich master-manufacturers of the Suburb Saint-Antoine, with whose workmen they consort.

CHAPTER III

GROWN ELECTRIC

But now also National Deputies from all ends of France are in Paris, with their commissions, what they call *pouvoirs*, or powers, in their pockets; inquiring, consulting; looking out for lodgings at Versailles. The States-General shall open there, if not on the First, then surely on the Fourth of May; in grand procession and gala. The *Salle des Menus* is all new-

[1] Lacretelle, 18^me *Siècle*, ii. 155.

[2] Besenval, iii. 385, etc.

carpentered, bedizened for them ; their very costume has been fixed : a grand controversy which there was, as to 'slouch-hats or slouched-hats,' for the Commons Deputies, has got as good as adjusted. Ever new strangers arrive : loungers, miscellaneous persons, officers on furlough,—as the worthy Captain Dampmartin, whom we hope to be acquainted with : these also, from all regions, have repaired hither, to see what is toward. Our Paris Committees, of the Sixty Districts, are busier than ever ; it is now too clear, the Paris Elections will be late.

On Monday, the 27th day of April, Astronomer Bailly notices that the Sieur Réveillon is not at his post. The Sieur Réveillon, 'extensive Paper Manufacturer of the Rue Saint-Antoine' : he, commonly so punctual, is absent from Electoral Committee ;—and even will never reappear there. In those 'immense Magazines of velvet paper' has aught befallen ? Alas, yes ! Alas, it is no Montgolfier rising there today ; but Drudgery, Rascality, and the Suburb that is rising ! Was the Sieur Réveillon, himself once a journeyman, heard to say that 'a journeyman might live handsomely on fifteen *sous* a-day' ? Some sevenpence halfpenny : 'tis a slender sum ! Or was he only thought, and believed, to be heard saying it ? By this long chafing and friction, it would appear, the National temper has got *electric*.

Down in those dark dens, in those dark heads and hungry hearts, who knows in what strange figure the new Political Evangel may have shaped itself ; what miraculous 'Communion of Drudges' may be getting formed ! Enough : grim individuals, soon waxing to grim multitudes, and other multitudes crowding to see, beset that Paper-Warehouse ; demonstrate, in loud ungrammatical language (addressed to the passions too), the insufficiency of sevenpence halfpenny a-day. The City-watch cannot dissipate them ; broils arise and bellowings : Réveillon, at his wits' end, entreats the Populace, entreats the Authorities. Besenval, now in active command, Commandant of Paris, does, towards evening, to Réveillon's earnest prayer, send some thirty Gardes Françaises. These clear the street, happily without firing; and take post there for the night, in hope that it may be all over.[1]

Not so: on the morrow it is far worse. Saint-Antoine has arisen anew, grimmer than ever;—reinforced by the unknown Tatterdemalion Figures, with their enthusiast complexion and large sticks. The City, through all streets, is flowing thitherward to see: 'two cartloads of paving-stones, that happened to pass that way,' have been seized as a visible godsend. Another detachment of Gardes Françaises must be sent; Besenval and the Colonel taking earnest counsel. Then still another; they hardly, with bayonets and menace of bullets, penetrate to the spot. What a sight! A street choked up, with lumber, tumult and the endless press of men. A Paper-Warehouse eviscerated by axe and fire: mad din of Revolt; musket-volleys responded to by yells, by miscellaneous missiles, by tiles raining from roof and window,—tiles, execrations, and slain men!

The Gardes Françaises like it not, but have to persevere. All day it continues, slackening and rallying; the sun is sinking, and Saint-Antoine has not yielded. The City flies hither and thither: alas, the sound of that musket-volleying booms into the far dining-rooms of the Chaussée d'Antin; alters the tone of the dinner-gossip there. Captain Dampmartin leaves his wine; goes out with a friend or two, to see the fighting. Unwashed men growl on him, with murmurs of '*À bas les Aristocrates* (Down with the Aristocrats)'; and insult the cross of St. Louis! They elbow him, and hustle him; but do not pick his pocket;—as indeed at Réveillon's too there was not the slightest stealing.[2]

At fall of night, as the thing will not end, Besenval takes his resolution: orders out the *Gardes Suisses* with two pieces of artillery. The Swiss Guards shall proceed thither; summon that rabble to depart, in the King's name. If disobeyed, they shall load their artillery with grape-shot, visibly to the general eye; shall again summon; if again disobeyed, fire,—and keep firing 'till the last man' be in this manner blasted off, and the street clear. With which spirited resolution, as might have been hoped, the business is got ended. At sight of the lit matches, of the foreign red-coated Switzers, Saint-Antoine dissipates; hastily, in the shades of dusk. There is an encumbered street; there are 'from four to five hundred' dead men. Unfortunate Réveillon has found shelter in the Bastille; does therefrom, safe behind stone bulwarks, issue plaint, protestation, explanation, for the next month. Bold Besenval has thanks from all the respectable Parisian classes; but finds no special notice taken of him at Versailles,—a thing the man of true worth is used to.[1]

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[1] Besenval, iii. 385-8.

[2] *Evènemens qui se sont passés sous mes yeux pendant la Révolution Française*, par A. H. Dampmartin (Berlin, 1799), i. 25-27.

But how it originated, this fierce electric sputter and explosion? From D'Orléans! cries the Court-party: he, with his gold, enlisted these Brigands,—surely in some surprising manner, without sound of drum: he raked them in hither, from all corners; to ferment and take fire; evil is his good. From the Court! cries enlightened Patriotism: it is the cursed gold and wiles of Aristocrats that enlisted them; set them upon ruining an innocent Sieur Réveillon; to frighten the faint, and disgust men with the career of Freedom.

Besenval, with reluctance, concludes that it came from 'the English, our natural enemies.' Or, alas, might not one rather attribute it to Diana in the shape of Hunger? To some twin *Dioscuri*, OPPRESSION and REVENGE; so often seen in the battles of men? Poor Lackalls, all betoiled, besoiled, encrusted into dim defacement;—into whom nevertheless the breath of the Almighty has breathed a living soul! To them it is clear only that eleutheromaniac Philosophism has yet baked no bread; that Patriot Committee-men will level down to their own level, and no lower. Brigands or whatever they might be, it was bitter earnest with them. They bury their dead with the title of *Défenseurs de la Patrie,* Martyrs of the good Cause.

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[1] Besenval, iii. 389.

Or shall we say: Insurrection has now *served* its Apprenticeship; and this was its proof-stroke, and no inconclusive one? Its next will be a master-stroke; announcing indisputable Mastership to a whole astonished world. Let that rock-fortress, Tyranny's stronghold, which they name *Bastille,* or *Building,* as if there were no other building,—look to its guns!

But, in such wise, with primary and secondary Assemblies, and *Cahiers* of Grievances; with motions, congregations of all kinds; with much thunder of froth-eloquence, and at last with thunder of platoon-musquetry,—does agitated France accomplish its Elections. With confused winnowing and sifting, in this rather tumultuous manner, it has now (all except some remnants of Paris) sifted out the true wheat-grains of National Deputies, Twelve Hundred and Fourteen in number; and will forthwith open its States-General.

CHAPTER IV

THE PROCESSION

On the first Saturday of May, it is gala at Versailles; and Monday, fourth of the month, is to be a still greater day. The Deputies have mostly got thither, and sought out lodgings; and are now successively, in long well-ushered files, kissing the hand of Majesty in the Château. Supreme Usher de Brézé does not give the highest satisfaction: we cannot but observe that in ushering Noblesse or Clergy into the anointed Presence, he liberally opens *both* his folding-doors; and on the other hand, for members of the Third Estate opens only one! However, there is room to enter; Majesty has smiles for all.

The good Louis welcomes his Honourable Members, with smiles of hope. He has prepared for them the Hall of *Menus*, the largest near him; and often surveyed the workmen as they went on. A spacious Hall: with raised platform for Throne, Court and Blood-royal; space for six hundred Commons Deputies in front; for half as many Clergy on this hand, and half as many Noblesse on that. It has lofty galleries; wherefrom dames of honour, splendent in *gaze d'or*; foreign Diplomacies, and other gilt-edged white-frilled individuals, to the number of two thousand,—may sit and look. Broad passages flow through it; and, outside the inner wall, all round it. There are committee-rooms, guard-rooms, robing-rooms: really a noble Hall; where upholstery, aided by the subject fine-arts, has done its best; and crimson tasseled cloths, and emblematic *fleurs-de-lys* are not wanting.

The Hall is ready: the very costume, as we said, has been settled; and the Commons are *not* to wear that hated slouch-hat (*chapeau clabaud*), but one not quite so slouched (*chapeau rabattu*). As for their manner of *working*, when all dressed; for their 'voting by head or by order' and the rest,—this, which it were perhaps still time to settle, and in few hours will be no longer time, remains unsettled; hangs dubious in the breast of Twelve Hundred men.

But now finally the Sun, on Monday the 4th of May, has risen;—unconcerned, as if it were no special day. And yet, as his first rays could strike music from the Memnon's Statue on the Nile, what tones were these, so thrilling, tremulous of preparation and foreboding, which he awoke in every bosom at Versailles! Huge Paris, in all conceivable and inconceivable vehicles, is pouring itself forth; from each Town and Village come subsidiary rills: Versailles is a very sea of men. But above all, from the Church of St. Louis to the Church of Notre-Dame: one vast suspended-billow of Life,—with *spray* scattered even to the chimney-tops! For on chimney-tops too, as over the roofs, and up thitherwards on every lamp-iron, sign-post, breakneck coign of vantage, sits patriotic Courage; and every window bursts with patriotic Beauty: for the Deputies are gathering at St. Louis Church; to march in procession to Notre-Dame, and hear sermon.

Yes, friends, ye may sit and look: bodily or in thought, all France, and all Europe, may sit and look; for it is a day like few others. Oh, one might weep like Xerxes:—So many serried rows sit perched there; like winged creatures, alighted out of Heaven: all these, and so many more that follow them, shall have wholly fled aloft again, vanishing into the blue Deep; and the memory of this day still be fresh. It is the baptism-day of Democracy; sick Time has given it birth, the numbered months being run. The extreme-unction day of Feudalism! A superannuated System of Society, decrepit with toils (for has it not done much; produced *you*, and what ye have and know!)—and with thefts and brawls, named glorious-victories; and with profligacies, sensualities, and on the whole with dotage and senility,—is now to die: and so, with death-throes and birth-throes, a new one is to be born. What a work, O Earth and Heavens, what a work! Battles and bloodshed, September Massacres, Bridges of Lodi, retreats of Moscow, Waterloos, Peterloos, Tenpound Franchises, Tarbarrels and Guillotines;——and from this present date, if one might prophesy, some two centuries of it still to fight! Two centuries; hardly less; before Democracy go through its due, most baleful, stages of *Quack*ocracy; and a pestilential World be burnt up, and have begun to grow green and young again.

Rejoice nevertheless, ye Versailles multitudes; to you, from whom all this is hid, the glorious end of it is visible. This day, sentence of death is pronounced on Shams; judgment of resuscitation, were it but afar off, is pronounced on Realities. This day it is declared aloud, as with a Doom-trumpet, that *a Lie is unbelievable.* Believe that, stand by that, if more there be not; and let what thing or things soever will follow it follow. 'Ye can no other; God be your help!' So spake a greater than any of you; opening *his* Chapter of World-History.

Behold, however! The doors of St. Louis Church flung wide; and the Procession of Processions advancing towards Notre-Dame! Shouts rend the air; one shout, at which Grecian birds might drop dead. It is indeed a stately, solemn sight. The Elected of France, and then the Court of France; they are marshalled and march there, all in prescribed place and costume. Our Commons 'in plain black mantle and white cravat'; Noblesse, in gold-worked, bright-dyed cloaks of velvet, resplendent, rustling with laces, waving with plumes; the Clergy in rochet, alb, or other best *pontificalibus*: lastly comes the King himself, and King's Household, also in their brightest blaze of pomp,—their brightest and final one. Some Fourteen Hundred Men blown together from all winds, on the deepest errand.

Yes, in that silent marching mass there lies Futurity enough. No symbolic Ark, like the old Hebrews, do these men bear: yet with them too is a Covenant; they too preside at a new Era in the History of Men. The whole Future is there, and Destiny dim-brooding over it; in the hearts and unshaped thoughts of these men, it lies illegible, inevitable. Singular to think: *they* have it in them; yet not they, not mortal, only the Eye above can read it,—as it shall unfold itself, in fire and thunder, of siege, and field-artillery; in the rustling of battle-banners, the tramp of hosts, in the glow of burning cities, the shriek of strangled nations! Such things lie hidden, safe-wrapt in this Fourth day of May;—say rather, had lain in some other unknown day, of which this latter is the public fruit and outcome. As indeed what wonders lie in every Day,—had we the sight, as happily we have not, to decipher it: for is not every meanest Day 'the conflux of two Eternities!'

Meanwhile, suppose we too, good Reader, should, as now without miracle Muse Clio enables us,—take *our* station also on some coign of vantage; and glance momentarily over this Procession, and this Life-sea; with far other eyes than the rest do, namely with prophetic? We can mount, and stand there, without fear of falling.

As for the Life-sea, or onlooking unnumbered Multitude, it is unfortunately all-too dim. Yet as we gaze fixedly, do not nameless Figures not a few, which shall not always be nameless, disclose themselves; visible or presumable there! Young Baroness de Staël—she evidently looks from a window; among older honourable women.[1] Her father is Minister, and one of the gala personages; to his own eyes the chief one. Young spiritual Amazon, thy rest is not there; nor thy loved Father's: 'as Malebranche saw all things in God, so M. Necker sees all things in Necker,'—a theorem that will not hold.

But where is the brown-locked, light-behaved, fire-hearted Demoiselle Théroigne? Brown eloquent Beauty; who, with thy winged words and glances, shalt thrill rough bosoms, whole steel battalions, and persuade an Austrian Kaiser,—pike and helm lie provided for thee in due season; and, alas, also strait-waistcoat and long lodging in the Salpêtrière! Better hadst thou stayed in native Luxemburg, and been the mother of some brave man's children: but it was not thy task, it was not thy lot.

Of the rougher sex how, without tongue, or hundred tongues, of iron, enumerate the notabilities! Has not Marquis Valadi hastily quitted his Quaker broadbrim; his Pythagorean Greek in Wapping, and the city of Glasgow?[2] De Morande from his *Courrier de l'Europe*; Linguet from his *Annales*, they looked eager through the London fog, and became Ex-Editors,—that they might feed the guillotine, and have their due. Does Louvet (of *Faublas*) stand a-tiptoe? And Brissot, hight De Warville, friend of the Blacks? He, with Marquis Condorcet, and Clavière the Genevese 'have created the *Moniteur* Newspaper,' or are about creating it. Able Editors must give account of such a day.

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[1] Madame de Staël, *Considérations sur la Révolution Française* (London, 1818), i. 114-191.

[2] *Founders of the French Republic* (London, 1798), § Valadi.

Or seest thou with any distinctness, low down probably, not in places of honour, a Stanislas Maillard, riding-tipstaff (*huissier à cheval*) of the Châtelet; one of the shiftiest of men? A Captain Hulin of Geneva, Captain Elie of the Queen's Regiment; both with an air of half-pay? Jourdan, with tile-coloured whiskers, not yet with tile-beard; an unjust dealer in mules? He shall be, in few months, Jourdan the Headsman, and have other work.

Surely also, in some place not of honour, stands or sprawls up querulous, that he too, though short, may see,—one squalidest bleared mortal, redolent of soot and horse-drugs: Jean Paul Marat of Neuchâtel! O Marat, Renovator of Human Science, Lecturer on Optics; O thou remarkablest Horseleech, once in D'Artois' Stables,—as thy bleared soul looks forth, through thy bleared, dull-acrid, wo-stricken face, what sees it in all this? Any faintest light of hope; like dayspring after Nova-Zembla night? Or is it but *blue* sulphur-light, and spectres; wo, suspicion, revenge without end?

Of Draper Lecointre, how he shut his cloth-shop hard by, and stepped forth, one need hardly speak. Nor of Santerre, the sonorous Brewer from the Faubourg St. Antoine. Two other Figures, and only two, we signalise there. The huge, brawny Figure; through whose black brows, and rude flattened face (*figure écrasée*), there looks a waste energy as of Hercules not yet furibund,—he is an esurient, unprovided Advocate; Danton by name: him mark. Then that other, his slight-built comrade and craft-brother; he with the long curling locks; with the face of dingy blackguardism, wondrously irradiated with genius, as if a naphtha-lamp burnt within it: that Figure is Camille Desmoulins. A fellow of infinite shrewdness, wit, nay humour; one of the sprightliest clearest souls in all these millions. Thou poor Camille, say of thee what they may, it were but falsehood to pretend one did not almost love thee, thou headlong lightly-sparkling man! But the brawny, not yet furibund Figure, we say, is Jacques Danton; a name that shall be 'tolerably known in the Revolution.' He is President of the electoral Cordeliers District at Paris, or about to be it; and shall open his lungs of brass.

We dwell no longer on the mixed shouting Multitude: for now, behold, the Commons Deputies are at hand!

Which of these Six Hundred individuals, in plain white cravat, that have come up to regenerate France, might one guess would become their *king*? For a king or leader they, as all bodies of men, must have: be their work what it may, there is one man there who, by character, faculty, position, is fittest of all to do it; that man, as future not yet elected king, walks there among the rest. He with the thick black locks, will it be? With the *hure*, as himself calls it, or black *boar's-head*, fit to be 'shaken' as a senatorial portent? Through whose shaggy beetle-brows, and rough-hewn, seamed carbuncled face, there look natural ugliness, small-pox, incontinence, bankruptcy,—and burning fire of genius; like comet-fire glaring fuliginous through murkiest confusions? It is *Gabriel Honoré Riquetti de Mirabeau*, the world-compeller; man-ruling Deputy of Aix! According to the Baroness de Staël, he steps proudly along, though looked at askance here; and shakes his black *chevelure*, or lion's-mane; as if prophetic of great deeds.

Yes, Reader, that is the Type-Frenchman of this epoch; as Voltaire was of the last. He is French in his aspirations, acquisitions, in his virtues, in his vices; perhaps more French than any other man;—and intrinsically such a mass of manhood too. Mark him well. The National Assembly were all different without that one; nay, he might say with the old Despot: 'The National Assembly? I am that.'

Of a southern climate, of wild southern blood: for the Riquettis, or Arrighettis, had to fly from Florence and the

Guelfs, long centuries ago, and settled in Provence; where from generation to generation they have ever approved themselves a peculiar kindred: irascible, indomitable, sharp-cutting, true, like the steel they wore; of an intensity and activity that sometimes verged towards madness, yet did not reach it. One ancient Riquetti, in mad fulfilment of a mad vow, chains two Mountains together; and the chain, with its 'iron star of five rays,' is still to be seen. May not a modern Riquetti *un*chain so much, and set it drifting,—which also shall be seen?

Destiny has work for that swart burly-headed Mirabeau; Destiny has watched over him, prepared him from afar. Did not his Grandfather, stout *Col-d'Argent* (Silver-Stock, so they named him), shattered and slashed by seven-and-twenty wounds in one fell day, lie sunk together on the Bridge at Casano; while Prince Eugene's cavalry galloped and regalloped over him,—only the flying sergeant had thrown a camp-kettle over that loved head; and Vendôme, dropping his spyglass, moaned out, 'Mirabeau is *dead*, then!' Nevertheless he was not dead: he awoke to breath, and miraculous surgery;—for Gabriel was yet to be. With his *silver stock* he kept his scarred head erect, through long years; and wedded; and produced tough Marquis Victor, the *Friend of Men.* Whereby at last in the appointed year 1749, this long-expected rough-hewn Gabriel Honoré did likewise see the light: roughest lion's-whelp ever littered of that rough breed. How the old lion (for our old Marquis too was lion-like, most unconquerable, kingly-genial, most perverse) gazed wondering on his offspring; and determined to train him as no lion had yet been! It is in vain, O Marquis! This cub, though thou slay him and flay him, will not learn to draw in dogcart of Political Economy, and be a *Friend of Men*; he will not be Thou, but must and will be Himself, another than Thou. Divorce lawsuits, 'whole family save one in prison, and three-score *Lettres-de-Cachet*' for thy own sole use, do but astonish the world.

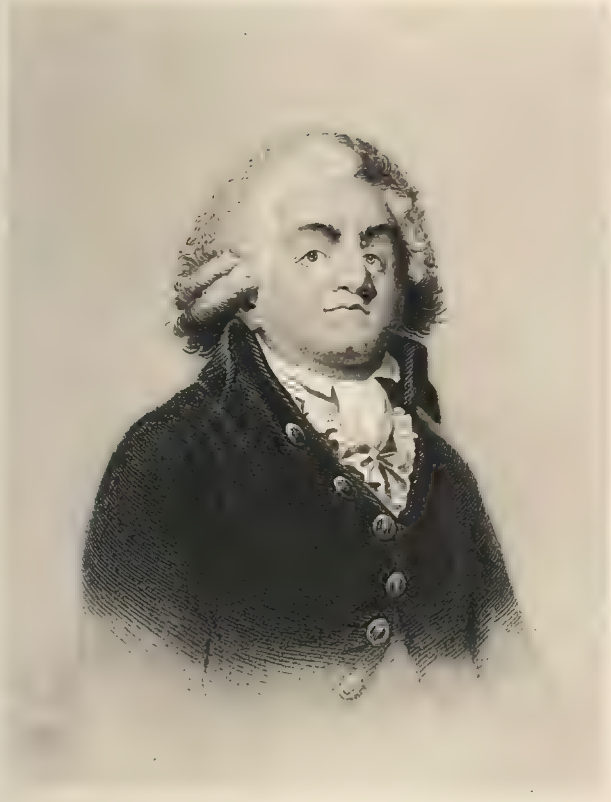
Our luckless Gabriel, sinned against and sinning, has been in the Isle of Rhé, and heard the Atlantic from his tower; in the Castle of If, and heard the Mediterranean at Marseilles. He has been in the Fortress of Joux; and forty-two months, with hardly clothing to his back, in the Dungeon of Vincennes;—all by *Lettre-de-Cachet*, from his lion father. He has been in Pontarlier Jails (self-constituted prisoner); was noticed fording estuaries of the sea (at low water), in flight from the face of men. He has pleaded before Aix Parlements (to get back his wife); the public gathering on roofs, to see since they could not hear: 'the clatter-teeth (*claque-dents*)!' snarls singular old Mirabeau; discerning in such admired forensic eloquence nothing but two clattering jawbones, and a head vacant, sonorous, of the drum species.

But as for Gabriel Honoré, in these strange wayfarings, what has he not seen and tried! From drill-sergeants, to prime-ministers, to foreign and domestic booksellers, all manner of men he has seen. All manner of men he has gained; for at bottom it is a social, loving heart, that wild unconquerable one:—more especially all manner of women. From the Archer's Daughter at Saintes to that fair young Sophie Madame Monnier, whom he could not but 'steal,' and be beheaded for—in effigy! For indeed hardly since the Arabian Prophet lay dead to Ali's admiration, was there seen such a Love-hero, with the strength of thirty men. In War, again, he has helped to conquer Corsica; fought duels, irregular brawls; horsewhipped calumnious barons. In Literature, he has written on *Despotism*, on *Lettres-de-Cachet*; Erotics Sapphic-Werterean, Obscenities, Profanities; Books on the *Prussian Monarchy*, on *Cagliostro*, on *Calonne*, on *the Water-Companies of Paris*:—each Book comparable, we will say, to a bituminous alarum-fire; huge, smoky, sudden! The fire-pan, the kindling, the bitumen were his own; but the lumber, of rags, old wood and nameless combustible rubbish (for all is fuel to him), was gathered from hucksters, and ass-panniers, of every description under heaven. Whereby, indeed, hucksters enough have been heard to exclaim : Out upon it, the fire is *mine* !

Nay, consider it more generally, seldom had man such a talent for borrowing. The idea, the faculty of another man he can make his; the man himself he can make his. 'All reflex and echo (*tout de reflet et de réverbère*)!' snarls old Mirabeau, who can see, but will not. Crabbed old Friend of Men! it is his sociality, his aggregative nature; and will now be the quality of qualities for him. In that forty-years' 'struggle against despotism,' he has gained the glorious faculty of *self-help*, and yet not lost the glorious natural gift of *fellowship*, of being helped. Rare union : this man can live self-sufficing—yet lives also in the life of other men; can make men love him, work with him; a born king of men!

But consider further how, as the old Marquis still snarls, he has 'made away with (*humé*, swallowed, snuffed-up) all *Formulas*';—a fact which, if we meditate it, will in these days mean much. This is no man of system, then; he is only a man of instincts and insights. A man nevertheless who will glare fiercely on any object; and see through it, and conquer it: for he has intellect, he has will, force beyond other men. A man not with *logic-spectacles*; but with an *eye*! Unhappily without Decalogue, moral Code or Theorem of any fixed sort; yet not without a strong living Soul in him, and Sincerity there: a Reality, not an artificiality, not a Sham! And so he, having struggled 'forty years against despotism,' and 'made away with all formulas,' shall now become the spokesman of a Nation bent to do the same. For is it not precisely the struggle of France also to cast off despotism; to make away with *her* old formulas,—having found them naught, worn out, far from the reality? She will make away with *such* formulas; —and even go *bare*, if need be, till she have found new ones.

Towards such work, in such manner, marches he, this singular Riquetti Mirabeau. In fiery rough figure, with black Samson-locks under the slouch-hat, he steps along there. A



Mirabeau.

fiery fuliginous mass, which could not be choked and smothered, but would fill all France with smoke. And now it has got *air*; it will burn its whole substance, its whole smoke-atmosphere too, and fill all France with flame. Strange lot! Forty years of that smouldering, with foul fire-damp and vapour enough; then victory over that;—and like a burning mountain he blazes heaven-high; and, for twenty-three resplendent months, pours out, in flame and molten fire-torrents, all that is in him, the Pharos and Wonder-sign of an amazed Europe; —and then lies hollow, cold for ever! Pass on, thou questionable Gabriel Honoré, the greatest of them all: in the whole National Deputies, in the whole Nation, there is none like and none second to thee.

But now if Mirabeau is the greatest, who of these Six Hundred may be the meanest? Shall we say, that anxious, slight, ineffectual-looking man, under thirty, in spectacles; his eyes (were the glasses off) troubled, careful; with upturned face, snuffing dimly the uncertain future time; complexion of a multiplex atrabiliar colour, the final shade of which may be the pale sea-green.[1] That greenish-coloured (*verdâtre*) individual is an Advocate of Arras; his name is *Maximilien Robespierre.* The son of an Advocate; his father founded mason-lodges under Charles Edward, the English Prince or Pretender. Maximilien the first-born was thriftily educated; he had brisk Camille Desmoulins for schoolmate in the College of Louis le Grand, at Paris. But he begged our famed Necklace-Cardinal, Rohan, the patron, to let him depart thence, and resign in favour of a younger brother. The strict-minded Max departed; home to paternal Arras; and even had a Law-case there and pleaded, not unsuccessfully, 'in favour of the first Franklin thunder-rod.' With a strict painful mind, an understanding small but clear and ready, he grew in favour with official persons, who could foresee in him an excellent man of business, happily quite free from genius. The Bishop, therefore, taking counsel, appoints him Judge of his diocese;

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[1] See De Staël, *Considérations* (ii. 142); Barbaroux, *Mémoires*, etc.

and he faithfully does justice to the people: till behold, one day, a culprit comes whose crime merits hanging; and the strict-minded Max must abdicate, for his conscience will not permit the dooming of any son of Adam to die. A strict-minded, strait-laced man! A man unfit for Revolutions? Whose small soul, transparent wholesome-looking as small-ale, could by no chance ferment into virulent *alegar*,—the mother of ever new alegar; till all France were grown acetous virulent? We shall see.

Between which two extremes of grandest and meanest, so many grand and mean roll on, towards their several destinies, in that Procession! There is *Cazalès*, the learned young soldier; who shall become the eloquent orator of Royalism, and earn the shadow of a name. Experienced *Mounier*, experienced *Malouet*; whose Presidential Parlementary experience the stream of things shall soon leave stranded. A *Pétion* has left his gown and briefs at Chartres for a stormier sort of pleading; has not forgotten his violin, being fond of music. His hair is grizzled, though he is still young: convictions, beliefs placid-unalterable are in that man; not hindmost of them, belief in himself. A Protestant-clerical *Rabaut-St.-Etienne*, a slender young eloquent and vehement *Barnave*, will help to regenerate France. There are so many of them young. Till thirty the Spartans did not suffer a man to marry: but how many men here under thirty; coming to produce not one sufficient citizen, but a nation and a world of such! The old to heal up rents; the young to remove rubbish:—which latter, is it not, indeed, the task here?

Dim, formless from this distance, yet authentically there, thou noticest the Deputies from Nantes? To us mere clothes-screens, with slouch-hat and cloak, but bearing in their pocket a *Cahier* of *doléances* with this singular clause, and more such, in it: 'That the master wigmakers of Nantes be not troubled with new guild-brethren, the actually existing number of ninety-two being more than sufficient!'[1] The

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[1] *Histoire Parlementaire*, i. 335.

Rennes people have elected Farmer *Gérard*, 'a man of natural sense and rectitude, without any learning.' He walks there, with solid step; unique, 'in his rustic farmer-clothes'; which he will wear always; careless of short-cloaks and costumes. The name Gérard, or '*Père Gérard*, Father Gérard,' as they please to call him, will fly far; borne about in endless banter; in Royalist satires, in Republican didactic Almanacks.[1] As for the man Gérard, being asked once, what he did, after trial of it, candidly think of this Parlementary work,—'I think,' answered he, 'that there are a good many scoundrels among us.' So walks Father Gérard; solid in his thick shoes, whithersoever bound.

And worthy *Doctor Guillotin*, whom we hoped to behold one other time? If not here, the Doctor should be here, and we see him with the eye of prophecy: for indeed the Parisian Deputies are all a little late. Singular Guillotin, respectable practitioner: doomed by a satiric destiny to the strangest immortal glory that ever kept obscure mortal from his resting-place, the bosom of oblivion! Guillotin can improve the ventilation of the Hall; in all cases of medical police and *hygiène* be a present aid: but, greater far, he can produce his 'Report on the Penal Code'; and reveal therein a cunningly devised Beheading Machine, which shall become famous and world-famous. This is the product of Guillotin's endeavours, gained not without meditation and reading; which product popular gratitude or levity christens by a feminine derivative name, as if it were his daughter: *La Guillotine*! 'With my machine, Messieurs, I whisk off your head (*vous fais sauter la tête*) in a twinkling, and you have no pain';—whereat they all laugh.[2] Unfortunate Doctor! For two-and-twenty years he, unguillotined, shall hear nothing but guillotine, see nothing but guillotine; then dying, shall through long centuries wander, as it were, a disconsolate ghost, on the wrong side of Styx and Lethe; his name like to outlive Cæsar's.

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[1] *Actes des Apôtres* (by Peltier and others); *Almanach du Père Gérard* (by Collot d'Herbois), etc. etc.

[2] *Moniteur* Newspaper, of December 1st, 1789 (in *Histoire Parlementaire*).

See *Bailly*, likewise of Paris, time-honoured Historian of Astronomy Ancient and Modern. Poor Bailly, how thy serenely beautiful Philosophising, with its soft moonshiny clearness and thinness, ends in foul thick confusion—of Presidency, Mayorship, diplomatic Officiality, rabid Triviality, and the throat of everlasting Darkness! Far was it to descend from the heavenly Galaxy to the *Drapeau Rouge*: beside that fatal dung-heap, on that last hell-day, thou must 'tremble,' though only with cold ('*de froid*'). Speculation is not practice: to be weak is not so miserable; but to be weaker than our task. Wo the day when they mounted thee, a peaceable pedestrian, on that wild Hippogriff of a Democracy; which, spurning the firm earth, nay lashing at the very *stars*, no yet known Astolpho could have ridden!

In the Commons Deputies there are Merchants, Artists, Men of Letters; three hundred and seventy-four Lawyers;[1] and at least one Clergyman: the *Abbé Sieyes*. Him also Paris sends, among its twenty. Behold him, the light thin man; cold, but elastic, wiry; instinct with the pride of Logic; passionless, or with but one passion, that of self-conceit. If indeed that can be called a passion, which, in its independent concentrated greatness, seems to have soared into transcendentalism; and to sit there with a kind of godlike indifference, and look down on passion! He is the man, and wisdom shall die with him. This is the Sieyes who shall be System-builder, Constitution-builder General; and build Constitutions (as many as wanted) skyhigh,—which shall all unfortunately fall before he get the scaffolding away. '*La Politique*,' said he to Dumont, 'Polity is a science I think I have completed (*achevée*).'[2] What things, O Sieyes, with thy clear assiduous eyes, art thou to see! But were it not curious to know how Sieyes, now in these days (for he is said to be still alive)[1] looks out on all that Constitution masonry, through the rheumy soberness of extreme age? Might we hope, still with the old irrefragable transcendentalism? The victorious cause pleased the gods, the vanquished one pleased Sieyes (*victa Catoni*).

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[1] Bouillé, *Mémoires sur la Révolution Française* (London, 1797), i. 68.

[2] Dumont, *Suvenirs sur Mirabeau*, p. 64.

Thus, however, amid skyrending *vivats*, and blessings from every heart, has the Procession of the Commons Deputies rolled by.

Next follow the Noblesse, and next the Clergy; concerning both of whom it might be asked, What they specially have come for? Specially, little as they dream of it, to answer this question, put in a voice of thunder: What are you doing in God's fair Earth and Task-garden; where whosoever is not working is begging or stealing? Wo, wo to themselves and to all, if they can only answer: Collecting tithes, Preserving game!—Remark, meanwhile, how *D'Orléans* affects to step before his own Order, and mingle with the Commons. For him are *vivats*: few for the rest, though all wave in plumed 'hats of a feudal cut,' and have sword on thigh; though among them is *D'Antraigues*, the young Languedocian gentleman,—and indeed many a Peer more or less noteworthy.

There are *Liancourt*, and *La Rochefoucault*; the liberal Anglomaniac Dukes. There is a filially pious *Lally*; a couple of liberal *Lameths*. Above all, there is a *Lafayette*; whose name shall be Cromwell-Grandison, and fill the world. Many a 'formula' has this Lafayette too made away with; yet not *all* formulas. He sticks by the Washington-formula; and by that he will stick;—and hang by it, as by sure bower-anchor hangs and swings the tight war-ship, which, after all changes of wildest weather and water, is found still hanging. Happy for him; be it glorious or not! Alone of all Frenchmen he has a theory of the world, and right mind to conform thereto; he can become a hero and perfect character, were it but the hero of one idea. Note further our old Parlementary friend, *Crispin-*

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[1] A.D. 1834.

Catiline d'Espréménil. He is returned from the Mediterranean Islands, a redhot royalist, repentant to the finger-ends;—unsettled-looking; whose light, dusky-glowing at best, now flickers foul in the socket; whom the National Assembly will by and by, to save time, 'regard as in a state of distraction.' Note lastly that globular *Younger* Mirabeau; indignant that his elder Brother is among the Commons: it is *Viscomte* Mirabeau; named oftener Mirabeau *Tonneau* (Barrel Mirabeau), on account of his rotundity, and the quantities of strong liquor he contains.

There then walks our French Noblesse. All in the old pomp of chivalry: and yet, alas, how changed from the old position; drifted far down from their native latitude, like Arctic icebergs got into the Equatorial sea, and fast thawing there! Once these Chivalry *Duces* (Dukes, as they are still named) did actually *lead* the world,—were it only towards battle-spoil, where lay the world's best wages then: moreover, being the ablest Leaders going, they had their lion's share, those *Duces*; which none could grudge them. But now, when so many Looms, improved Ploughshares, Steam-Engines, and Bills of Exchange have been invented; and, for battle-brawling itself, men hire Drill-Sergeants at eighteenpence a-day,—what mean these goldmantled Chivalry Figures, walking there 'in black-velvet cloaks,' in high-plumed 'hats of a feudal cut'? Reeds shaken in the wind!

The Clergy have got up; with *Cahiers* for abolishing pluralities, enforcing residence of bishops, better payment of tithes.[1] The Dignitaries, we can observe, walk stately, apart from the numerous Undignified,—who indeed are properly little other than Commons disguised in Curate-frocks. Here, however, though by strange ways, shall the Precept be fulfilled, and they that are greatest (much to their astonishment) become least. For one example, out of many, mark that plausible *Grégoire*: one day Curé Grégoire shall be a Bishop, when the now stately are wandering distracted, as Bishops *in partibus*. With other thought, mark also the *Abbé Maury*: his broad bold face; mouth accurately primmed; full eyes, that ray out intelligence, falsehood,—the sort of sophistry which is astonished you should find it sophistical. Skilfulest vamper-up of old rotten leather, to make it look like new; always a rising man; he used to tell Mercier, 'You will see; I shall be in the Academy before you.'[1] Likely indeed, thou skilfulest Maury; nay thou shalt have a Cardinal's Hat, and plush and glory; but alas, also, in the long-run—mere oblivion, like the rest of us; and six feet of earth! What boots it, vamping rotten leather on these terms? Glorious in comparison is the livelihood thy good old Father earns, by making shoes,—one may hope, in a sufficient manner. Maury does not want for audacity. He shall wear pistols, by and by; and, at death-cries of '*La Lanterne*, The Lamp-iron!'—answer coolly, Friends, will you see better there?'

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[1] *Hist. Parl.* i. 322-27.

But yonder, halting lamely along, thou noticest next *Bishop Talleyrand-Perigord*, his Reverence of Autun. A sardonic grimness lies in that irreverend Reverence of Autun. He will do and suffer strange things; and will *become* surely one of the strangest things ever seen, or like to be seen. A man living in falsehood, and on falsehood; yet not what you can call a false man there is the specialty! It will be an enigma for future ages, one may hope: hitherto such a product of Nature and Art was possible only for this age of ours,—Age of Paper, and of the Burning of Paper. Consider Bishop Talleyrand and Marquis Lafayette as the topmost of their two kinds, and say once more, looking at what they did and what they were, *O Tempus ferax rerum!*

On the whole, however, has not this unfortunate Clergy also drifted in the Time-stream, far from its native latitude? An anomalous mass of men; of whom the whole world has already a dim understanding that it can understand nothing. They were once a Priesthood, interpreters of Wisdom, revealers of the Holy that is in Man; a true *Clerus* (or Inheritance of God on Earth): but now?—They pass silently, with such *Cahiers* as they have been able to redact; and none cries, God bless them!

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[1] Mercier, *Nouveau Paris*.

King Louis with his Court brings up the rear: he cheerful, in this day of hope, is saluted with plaudits; still more Necker his Minister. Not so the Queen; on whom hope shines not steadily any more. Ill-fated Queen! Her hair is already grey with many cares and crosses; her first-born son is dying in these weeks: black falsehood has ineffaceably soiled her name; ineffaceably while this generation lasts. Instead of *Vive la Reine*, voices insult her with *Vive d'Orléans.* Of her queenly beauty little remains except its stateliness; not now gracious, but haughty, rigid, silently enduring. With a most mixed feeling, wherein joy has no part, she resigns herself to a day she hoped never to have seen. Poor Marie Antoinette; with thy quick noble instincts; vehement glancings, vision all-too fitful narrow for the work thou hast to do! O there are tears in store for thee; bitterest wailings, soft womanly meltings, though thou hast the heart of an imperial Theresa's Daughter. Thou doomed one, shut thy eyes on the future!—

And so, in stately Procession, have passed the Elected of France. Some towards honour and quick fire-consummation; most towards dishonour; not a few towards massacre, confusion, emigration, desperation: all towards Eternity!—So many heterogeneities cast together into the fermenting-vat; there, with incalculable action, counteraction, elective affinities, explosive developments, to work out healing for a sick moribund System of Society! Probably the strangest Body of Men, if we consider well, that ever met together on our Planet on such an errand. So thousandfold complex a Society, ready to burst-up from its infinite depths; and these men, its rulers and healers, without life-rule for themselves,—other life-rule than a Gospel according to Jean Jacques! To the wisest of them, what we must call the wisest, man is properly an Accident under the sky. Man is without Duty round him; except it be 'to make the Constitution.' He is without Heaven above him, or Hell beneath him; he has no God in the world.

What further or better belief can be said to exist in these Twelve Hundred? Belief in high-plumed hats of a feudal cut; in heraldic scutcheons; in the divine right of Kings, in the divine right of Game-destroyers. Belief, or what is still worse, canting half-belief; or worst of all, mere Macchiavellic pretence-of-belief,—in consecrated dough-wafers, and the godhood of a poor old Italian Man! Nevertheless in that immeasurable Confusion and Corruption, which struggles there so blindly to become less confused and corrupt, there is, as we said, this one salient point of a New Life discernible: the deep fixed Determination to have done with Shams. A determination which, consciously or unconsciously, is *fixed*; which waxes ever more fixed, into very madness and fixed-idea; which in such embodiment as lies provided there, shall now unfold itself rapidly: monstrous, stupendous, unspeakable; new for long thousands of years!—How has the Heaven's *light*, oftentimes in this Earth, to clothe itself in thunder and electric murkiness; and descend as molten *lightning*, blasting, if purifying! Nay is it not rather the very murkiness, and atmospheric suffocation, that *brings* the lightning and the light? The new Evangel, as the old had been, was it to be born in the Destruction of a World?

But how the Deputies assisted at High Mass, and heard sermon, and applauded the preacher, church as it was, when he preached politics; how, next day, with sustained pomp, they are, for the first time, installed in their *Salle des Menus* (Hall no longer of *Amusements*), and become a States-General, —readers can fancy for themselves. The King from his *estrade*, gorgeous as Solomon in all his glory, runs his eye over that majestic Hall; many-plumed, many-glancing; bright-tinted as rainbow, in the galleries and near side-spaces, where Beauty sits raining bright influence. Satisfaction, as of one that after long voyaging had got to port, plays over his broad simple face : the innocent King ! He rises and speaks, with sonorous tone, a conceivable speech. With which, still more with the succeeding one-hour and two-hours speeches of Garde-des-Sceaux and M. Necker, full of nothing but patriotism, hope, faith, and deficiency of the revenue,—no reader of these pages shall be tried.

We remark only that, as his Majesty, on finishing the speech, put on his plumed hat, and the Noblesse according to custom imitated him, our Tiers-État Deputies did mostly, not without a shade of fierceness, in like manner clap-on, and even crush-on their slouched hats ; and stand there awaiting the issue.[1] Thick buzz among them, between majority and minority of *Couvrez-vous, Découvrez-vous* (Hats off, Hats on) ! To which his Majesty puts end, by taking *off* his own royal hat again.

The session terminates without further accident or omen than this ; with which, significantly enough, France has opened her States-General.

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[1] *Histoire Parlementaire* (i. 356). Mercier, *Nouveau Paris*, etc.

BOOK FIFTH

THE THIRD ESTATE

CHAPTER I

INERTIA

THAT exasperated France, in this same National Assembly of hers, has got something, nay something great, momentous, indispensable, cannot be doubted; yet still the question were: Specially *what?* A question hard to solve, even for calm onlookers at this distance; wholly insoluble to actors in the middle of it. The States-General, created and conflated by the passionate effort of the whole Nation, is there as a thing high and lifted up. Hope, jubilating, cries aloud that it will prove a miraculous Brazen Serpent in the Wilderness; whereon whosoever looks, with faith and obedience, shall be healed of all woes and serpent-bites.

We may answer, it will at least prove a symbolic Banner; round which the exasperated complaining Twenty-five Millions, otherwise isolated and without power, may rally, and work—what it is in them to work. If battle must be the work, as one cannot help expecting, then shall it be a battle-banner (say, an Italian Gonfalon, in its old Republican *Carroccio*); and shall tower up, car-borne, shining in the wind: and with iron tongue peal forth many a signal. A thing of prime necessity; which whether in the van or in the centre, whether leading or led and driven, must do the fighting multitude incalculable services. For a season, while it floats in the very front, nay as it were stands solitary there, waiting whether force will gather round it, this same National *Carroccio*, and the signal-peals it rings, are a main object with us.

The omen of the 'slouch-hats clapt on' shows the Commons Deputies to have made up their minds on one thing· that neither Noblesse nor Clergy shall have precedence of them; hardly even Majesty itself. To such length has the *Contrat Social*, and force of public opinion, carried us. For what is Majesty but the Delegate of the Nation; delegated, and bargained with (even rather tightly),—in some very singular posture of affairs, which Jean Jacques has not fixed the date of?

Coming therefore into their Hall, on the morrow, an inorganic mass of Six Hundred individuals, these Commons Deputies perceive, without terror, that they have it all to themselves. Their Hall is also the Grand or general Hall for all the Three Orders. But the Noblesse and Clergy, it would seem, have retired to their two separate Apartments, or Halls; and are there 'verifying their powers,' not in a conjoint but in a separate capacity. They are to constitute two separate, perhaps separately-voting Orders, then? It is as if both Noblesse and Clergy had silently taken for granted that they already were such! Two Orders against one; and so the Third Order to be left in a perpetual minority?

Much may remain unfixed; but the negative of that is a thing fixed: in the Slouch-hatted heads, in the French Nation's head. Double representation, and all else hitherto gained, were otherwise futile, null. Doubtless, the 'powers must be verified';—doubtless, the Commission, the electoral Documents of your Deputy must be inspected by his brother Deputies, and found valid: it is the preliminary of all. Neither is this question, of doing it separately or doing it conjointly, a vital one: but if it lead to such? It must be resisted; wise was that maxim, Resist the beginnings! Nay were resistance unadvisable, even dangerous, yet surely pause is very natural: pause, with Twenty-five Millions behind you, may become resistance enough.—The inorganic mass of

Commons Deputies will restrict itself to a 'system of inertia,' and for the present remain inorganic.

Such method, recommendable alike to sagacity and to timidity, do the Commons Deputies adopt; and, not without adroitness, and with ever more tenacity, they persist in it, day after day, week after week. For six weeks their history is of the kind named barren; which indeed, as Philosophy knows, is often the fruitfulest of all. These were their still creation-days; wherein they sat incubating! In fact, what they did was to do nothing, in a judicious manner. Daily the inorganic body reassembles; regrets that they cannot get organisation, 'verification of powers in common,' and begin regenerating France. Headlong motions may be made, but let such be repressed; inertia alone is at once unpunishable and unconquerable.

Cunning must be met by cunning; proud pretension by inertia, by a low tone of patriotic sorrow; low, but incurable, unalterable. Wise as serpents; harmless as doves: what a spectacle for France! Six Hundred inorganic individuals, essential for its regeneration and salvation, sit there, on their elliptic benches, longing passionately towards life; in painful durance; like souls waiting to be born. Speeches are spoken; eloquent; audible within doors and without. Mind agitates itself against mind; the Nation looks on with ever deeper interest. Thus do the Commons Deputies sit incubating.

There are private conclaves, supper-parties, consultations; Breton Club, Club of Viroflay; germs of many Clubs. Wholly an element of confused noise, dimness, angry heat;—wherein, however, the Eros-egg, kept at the fit temperature, may hover safe, unbroken till it be hatched. In your Mouniers, Malouets, Lechapeliers is science sufficient for that; fervour in your Barnaves, Rabauts. At times shall come an inspiration from royal Mirabeau: he is nowise yet recognised as royal; nay he was 'groaned at,' when his name was first mentioned: but he is struggling towards recognition.

In the course of the week, the Commons having called their Eldest to the chair, and furnished him with young stronger-lunged assistants,—can speak articulately; and, in audible lamentable words, declare, as we said, that they are an inorganic body, longing to become organic. Letters arrive; but an inorganic body cannot open letters; they lie on the table unopened. The Eldest may at most procure for himself some kind of List or Muster-roll, to take the votes by; and wait what will betide. Noblesse and Clergy are all elsewhere: however, an eager public crowds all galleries and vacancies; which is some comfort. With effort, it is determined, not that a Deputation shall be sent,—for how can an inorganic body send deputations?—but that certain individual Commons Members shall, in an accidental way, stroll into the Clergy Chamber, and then into the Noblesse one; and mention there, as a thing they have happened to observe, that the Commons seem to be sitting waiting for them, in order to verify their powers. That is the wiser method!

The Clergy, among whom are such a multitude of Undignified, of mere Commons in Curates' frocks, depute instant respectful answer that they are, and will now more than ever be, in deepest study as to that very matter. Contrariwise the Noblesse, in cavalier attitude, reply, after four days, that they, for their part, are all verified and constituted; which, they had trusted, the Commons also were; such *separate* verification being clearly the proper constitutional wisdom-of-ancestors method;—as they the Noblesse will have much pleasure in demonstrating by a Commission of their number, if the Commons will meet them, Commission against Commission! Directly in the rear of which comes a deputation of Clergy, reiterating, in their insidious conciliatory way, the same proposal. Here, then, is a complexity: what will wise Commons say to this?

Warily, inertly, the wise Commons, considering that they are, if not a French Third Estate, at least an Aggregate of individuals pretending to some title of that kind, determine, after talking on it five days, to name such a Commission,—though, as it were, with proviso not to be convinced: a sixth day is taken up in naming it; a seventh and an eighth day in getting the forms of meeting, place, hour and the like, settled: so that it is not till the evening of the 23d of May that Noblesse Commission first meets Commons Commission, Clergy acting as Conciliators; and begins the impossible task of convincing it. One other meeting, on the 25th, will suffice: the Commons are inconvincible, the Noblesse and Clergy irrefragably convincing; the Commissions retire; each Order persisting in its first pretensions.[1]

Thus have three weeks passed. For three weeks, the Third-Estate Carroccio, with far-seen Gonfalon, has stood stockstill, flouting the wind; waiting what force would gather round it.

Fancy can conceive the feeling of the Court; and how counsel met counsel, and loud-sounding inanity whirled in that distracted vortex, where wisdom could not dwell. Your cunningly devised Taxing-Machine has been got together; set up with incredible labour; and stands there, its three pieces in contact; its two fly-wheels of Noblesse and Clergy, its huge working-wheel of Tiers-État. The two fly-wheels whirl in the softest manner; but, prodigious to look upon, the huge working-wheel hangs motionless, refuses to stir! The cunningest engineers are at fault. How *will* it work, when it does begin? Fearfully, my Friends; and to many purposes; but to gather taxes, or grind court-meal, one may apprehend, never. Could we but have continued gathering taxes *by hand*! Messeigneurs d'Artois, Conti, Condé (named Court Triumvirate), they of the anti-democratic *Mémoire au Roi*, has not their foreboding proved true? They may wave reproachfully their high heads; they may beat their poor brains; but the cunningest engineers can do nothing. Necker himself, were he even listened to, begins to look blue. The only thing one sees advisable is to bring up soldiers. New regiments, two, and a battalion of a third, have already reached Paris; others shall get in march. Good were it, in all circumstances, to have troops within reach; good that the command were in sure hands. Let Broglie be appointed; old Marshal Duke de Broglie; veteran disciplinarian, of a firm drill-sergeant morality, such as may be depended on.

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[1] Reported Debates, 6th May to 1st June 1789 (in *Histoire Parlementaire*, i. 379-422).

For, alas, neither are the Clergy, or the very Noblesse what they should be; and might be, when so menaced from without: entire, undivided within. The Noblesse, indeed, have their Catiline or Crispin D'Espréménil, dusky-glowing, all in renegade heat; their boisterous Barrel-Mirabeau; but also they have their Lafayettes, Liancourts, Lameths; above all, their D'Orléans, now cut for ever from his Court-moorings, and musing drowsily of high and highest sea-prizes (for is not he too a son of Henri Quatre, and partial potential Heir-Apparent?)—on his voyage towards Chaos. From the Clergy again, so numerous are the Curés, actual deserters have run over: two small parties; in the second party Curé Grégoire. Nay there is talk of a whole Hundred and Forty-nine of them about to desert in mass, and only restrained by an Archbishop of Paris. It seems a losing game.

But judge if France, if Paris sat idle, all this while! Addresses from far and near flow in: for our Commons have now grown organic enough to open letters. Or indeed to cavil at them! Thus poor Marquis de Brézé, Supreme Usher, Master of Ceremonies, or whatever his title was, writing about this time on some ceremonial matter, sees no harm in winding up with a 'Monsieur, yours with sincere attachment.'—'To whom does it address itself, this sincere attachment?' inquires Mirabeau. 'To the Dean of the Tiers-État.'—'There is no man in France entitled to write that,' rejoins he; whereat the Galleries and the World will not be kept from applauding.[1] Poor de Brézé! These Commons have a still older grudge at him; nor has he yet done with them.

In another way, Mirabeau has had to protest against the

[1] *Moniteur* (in *Histoire Parlementaire*, i. 405).

quick suppression of his Newspaper, *Journal of the States-General*;—and to continue it under a new name. In which act of valour, the Paris Electors, still busy redacting their *Cahier*, could not but support him, by Address to his Majesty: they claim utmost 'provisory freedom of the press'; they have spoken even about demolishing the Bastille, and erecting a Bronze Patriot King on the site!—These are the rich Burghers: but now consider how it went, for example, with such loose miscellany, now all grown eleutheromaniac, of Loungers, Prowlers, social Nondescripts (and the distilled Rascality of our Planet), as whirls for ever in the Palais-Royal;—or what low infinite groan, fast changing into a growl, comes from Saint-Antoine, and the Twenty-five Millions in danger of starvation!

There is the indisputablest scarcity of corn;—be it Aristocrat-plot, D'Orléans-plot, of this year; or drought and hail of last year: in city and province, the poor man looks desolately towards a nameless lot. And this States-General, that could make us an age of gold, is forced to stand motionless; cannot get its powers verified! All industry necessarily languishes, if it be not that of making motions.

In the Palais Royal there has been erected, apparently by subscription, a kind of Wooden Tent (*en planches de bois*);[1]—most convenient; where select Patriotism can now redact resolutions, deliver harangues, with comfort, let the weather be as it will. Lively is that Satan-at-Home! On his table, on his chair, in every *café*, stands a patriotic orator; a crowd round him within; a crowd listening from without, open-mouthed, through open door and window; with 'thunders of applause for every sentiment of more than common hardiness.' In Monsieur Dessein's Pamphlet-shop, close by, you cannot without strong elbowing get to the counter: every hour produces its pamphlet, or litter of pamphlets; 'there were thirteen today, sixteen yesterday, ninety-two last week.'[2]

[1] *Histoire Parlementaire*, i. 429.

[2] Arthur Young, *Travels*, i. 104.

Think of Tyranny and Scarcity; Fervid-eloquence, Rumour, Pamphleteering; *Société Publicole*, Breton Club, Enraged Club;—and whether every tap-room, coffee-room, social re-union, accidental street-group, over wide France, was not an Enraged Club!

To all which the Commons Deputies can only listen with a sublime inertia of sorrow; reduced to busy themselves 'with their internal police.' Surer position no Deputies ever occupied; if they keep it with skill. Let not the temperature rise too high; break not the Eros-egg till it be hatched, till it break itself! An eager public crowds all Galleries and vacancies; 'cannot be restrained from applauding.' The two Privileged Orders, the Noblesse all verified and constituted, may look on with what face they will; not without a secret tremor of heart. The Clergy, always acting the part of conciliators, make a clutch at the Galleries, and the popularity there; and miss it. Deputation of them arrives, with dolorous message about the 'dearth of grains,' and the necessity there is of casting aside vain formalities, and deliberating on this. An insidious proposal; which, however, the Commons (moved thereto by sea-green Robespierre) dexterously accept as a sort of hint, or even pledge, that the Clergy will forthwith come over to them, constitute the States-General, and *so* cheapen grains![1]—Finally, on the 27th day of May, Mirabeau, judging the time now nearly come, proposes that 'the inertia cease'; that, leaving the Noblesse to their own stiff ways, the Clergy be summoned, 'in the name of the God of Peace,' to join the Commons, and begin.[2] To which summons if they turn a deaf ear,—we shall see! Are not one Hundred and Forty-nine of them ready to desert?

O Triumvirate of Princes, new Garde-des-Sceaux Barentin, thou Home-Secretary Breteuil, Duchess Polignac, and Queen eager to listen,—what is now to be done? This Third Estate will get in motion, with the force of all France in it; Clergy-machinery with Noblesse-machinery, which were to serve as beautiful counterbalances and drags, will be shamefully dragged after it,—and take fire along with it. What is to be done? The Œil-de-Bœuf waxes more confused than ever. Whisper and counter-whisper; a very tempest of whispers! Leading men from all the Three Orders are nightly spirited thither; conjurors many of them; but can they conjure this? Necker himself were now welcome, could he interfere to purpose.

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[1] Bailly, *Mémoires*, i. 114.

[2] *Histoire Parlementaire*, i. 413.

Let Necker interfere, then; and in the King's name! Happily that incendiary 'God-of-Peace' message is not yet *answered.* The Three Orders shall again have conferences; under this Patriot Minister of theirs, somewhat may be healed, clouted up;—we meanwhile getting forward Swiss Regiments, and a 'hundred pieces of field-artillery.' This is what the Œil-de-Bœuf, for its part, resolves on.

But as for Necker—Alas, poor Necker, thy obstinate Third Estate has one first-last word, *verification in common*, as the pledge of voting and deliberating in common! Half-way proposals, from such a tried friend, they answer with a stare. The tardy conferences speedily break up: The Third Estate, now ready and resolute, the whole world backing it, returns to its Hall of the Three Orders; and Necker to the Œil-de-Bœuf, with the character of a disconjured conjuror there,—fit only for dismissal.[1]

And so the Commons Deputies are at last on their own strength getting under way? Instead of Chairman, or Dean, they have now got a President: Astronomer Bailly. Under way, with a vengeance! With endless vociferous and temperate eloquence, borne on Newspaper wings to all lands, they have now, on this 17th day of June, determined that their name is not *Third Estate*, but—*National Assembly*! They, then, are the Nation? Triumvirate of Princes, Queen, refractory Noblesse and Clergy, what, then, are *you*? A most deep question;—scarcely answerable in living political dialects.

All regardless of which, our new National Assembly proceeds to appoint a 'committee of subsistences'; dear to France, though it can find little or no grain. Next, as if our National Assembly stood quite firm on its legs,—to appoint 'four other standing committees'; then to settle the security of the National Debt; then that of the Annual Taxation: all within eight-and-forty hours. At such rate of velocity it is going: the conjurors of the Œil-de-Bœuf may well ask themselves, Whither?

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[1] Debates, 1st to 17th June 1789 (in *Histoire Parlementaire*, i. 422-478).

CHAPTER II

MERCURY DE BREZE

Now surely were the time for a 'god from the machine'; there is a *nodus* worthy of one. The only question is, Which god? Shall it be Mars de Broglie, with his hundred pieces of cannon?—Not yet, answers prudence; so soft, irresolute is King Louis. Let it be Messenger *Mercury*, our Supreme Usher de Brézé!

On the morrow, which is the 20th of June, these Hundred and Forty-nine false Curates, no longer restrainable by his Grace of Paris, will desert in a body: let De Brézé intervene, and produce—closed doors! Not only shall there be Royal Session, in that Salle des Menus; but no meeting, nor working (except by carpenters), till then. Your Third Estate, self-styled 'National Assembly,' shall suddenly see itself extruded from its Hall, by carpenters, in this dexterous way; and reduced to do nothing, not even to meet, or articulately lament,—till Majesty, with *Séance Royale* and new miracles, be ready! In this manner shall De Brézé, as Mercury *ex machinâ*, intervene; and, if the Œil-de-Bœuf mistake not, work deliverance from the *nodus*.

Of poor De Brézé we can remark that he has yet prospered in none of his dealings with these Commons. Five weeks ago, when they kissed the hand of Majesty, the mode he took got nothing but censure; and then his 'sincere attachment,' how was it scornfully whiffed aside! Before supper, this night, he writes to President Bailly, a new Letter, to be delivered shortly after dawn tomorrow, in the King's name. Which Letter, however, Bailly, in the pride of office, will merely crush together into his pocket, like a bill he does not mean to pay.

Accordingly on Saturday morning the 20th of June, shrill-sounding heralds proclaim, through the streets of Versailles, that there is to be *Séance Royale* next Monday; and no meeting of the States-General till then. And yet, we observe, President Bailly, in sound of this, and with De Brézé's Letter in his pocket, is proceeding, with National Assembly at his heels, to the accustomed Salle des Menus; as if De Brézé and heralds were mere wind. It is shut, this Salle; occupied by Gardes Françaises. 'Where is your Captain?' The Captain shows his royal order: workmen, he is grieved to say, are all busy setting up the platform for his Majesty's *Séance*; most unfortunately, no admission; admission, at furthest, for President and Secretaries to bring away papers, which the joiners might destroy!—President Bailly enters with Secretaries; and returns bearing papers; alas, within doors, instead of patriotic eloquence, there is now no noise but hammering, sawing, and operative screeching and rumbling! A profanation without parallel.

The Deputies stand grouped on the Paris Road, on this umbrageous *Avenue de Versailles*; complaining aloud of the indignity done them. Courtiers, it is supposed, look from their windows, and giggle. The morning is none of the comfortablest: raw; it is even drizzling a little.[1] But all travellers pause; patriot gallery-men, miscellaneous spectators increase the groups. Wild counsels alternate. Some desperate Deputies propose to go and hold session on the great outer Staircase at Marly, under the King's windows; for his Majesty, it seems, has driven over thither. Others talk of making the Château Forecourt, what they call *Place d'Armes*, a Runnymede and new *Champ de Mai* of free Frenchmen: nay of awakening, to sounds of indignant Patriotism, the echoes of the Œil-de-Bœuf itself.—Notice is given that President Bailly, aided by judicious Guillotin and others, has found place in the Tennis-Court of the Rue St. François. Thither, in long-drawn files, hoarse-jingling, like cranes on wing, the Commons Deputies angrily wend.

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[1] Bailly, *Mémoires*, i. 185-206.

Strange sight was this in the Rue St. François, Vieux Versailles! A naked Tennis-Court, as the pictures of that time still give it: four walls; naked, except aloft some poor wooden penthouse, or roofed spectators'-gallery, hanging round them:—on the floor not now an idle teeheeing, a snapping of balls and rackets; but the bellowing din of an indignant National Representation, scandalously exiled hither! However, a cloud of witnesses looks down on them, from wooden penthouse, from wall-top, from adjoining roof and chimney; rolls towards them from all quarters, with passionate spoken blessings. Some table can be procured to write on; some chair, if not to sit on, then to stand on. The Secretaries undo their tapes; Bailly has constituted the Assembly.

Experienced Mounier, not wholly new to such things, in Parlementary revolts, which he has seen or heard of, thinks that it were well, in these lamentable threatening circumstances, to unite themselves by an Oath.—Universal acclamation, as from smouldering bosoms getting vent! The Oath is redacted; pronounced aloud by President Bailly,—and indeed in such a sonorous tone, that the cloud of witnesses, even outdoors, hear it, and bellow response to it. Six hundred right-hands rise with President Bailly's, to take God above to witness that they will not separate for man below, but will meet in all places, under all circumstances, wheresoever two or three can get together, till they have made the Constitution. Made the Constitution, Friends! That is a long task. Six hundred hands, meanwhile, will sign as they have sworn: six hundred save *one*; one Loyalist Abdiel, still visible by this sole light-point, and namable, poor 'M. Martin d'Auch, from Castelnaudary, in Languedoc.' Him they permit to sign or signify refusal; they even save him from the cloud of witnesses, by declaring 'his head deranged.' At four o'clock, the signatures are all appended; new meeting is fixed for Monday morning, earlier than the hour of the Royal Session; that our Hundred and Forty-nine Clerical deserters be not balked: we will meet 'at the Recollets Church or elsewhere,' in hope that our Hundred and Forty-nine will join us;—and now it is time to go to dinner.

This, then, is the Session of the Tennis-Court, famed *Séance du Jeu de Paume*; the fame of which has gone forth to all lands. This is Mercurius de Brézé's appearance as *Deus ex machinâ*; this is the fruit it brings! The giggle of Courtiers in the Versailles Avenue has already died into gaunt silence. Did the distracted Court, with Garde-des-Sceaux Barentin, Triumvirate and Company, imagine that they could scatter six hundred National Deputies, big with a National Constitution, like as much barndoor poultry, big with next to nothing,—by the white or black rod of a Supreme Usher? Barndoor poultry fly cackling: but National Deputies turn round, lion-faced; and, with uplifted right-hand, swear an Oath that makes the four corners of France tremble.

President Bailly has covered himself with honour; which shall become rewards. The National Assembly is now doubly and trebly the Nation's Assembly; not militant, martyred only, but triumphant; insulted, and which could not *be* insulted. Paris disembogues itself once more, to witness, 'with grim looks,' the *Séance Royale*:[1] which, by a new felicity, is postponed till Tuesday. The Hundred and Forty-nine, and even with Bishops among them, all in processional mass, have had free leisure to march off, and solemnly join the Commons sitting waiting in their Church. The Commons welcomed

[1] See Arthur Young (*Travels*, i. 115-118); A. Lameth, etc.

them with shouts, with embracings, nay with tears;[1] for it is growing a life-and-death matter now.

As for the *Séance* itself, the Carpenters seem to have accomplished their platform; but all else remains unaccomplished. Futile, we may say fatal, was the whole matter. King Louis enters, through seas of people, all grim-silent, angry with many things,—for it is a bitter rain too. Enters, to a Third Estate, likewise grim-silent; which has been wetted waiting under mean porches, at back-doors, while Court and Privileged were entering by the front. King and Garde-des-Sceaux (there is no Necker visible) make known, not without longwindedness, the determinations of the royal breast. The Three Orders *shall* vote separately. On the other hand, France may look for considerable constitutional blessings; as specified in these Five-and-thirty Articles,[2] which Garde-des-Sceaux is waxing hoarse with reading. Which Five-and-thirty Articles, adds his Majesty again rising, if the Three Orders most unfortunately cannot agree together to effect them, I myself will effect: '*seul je ferai le bien de mes peuples*,'—which being interpreted may signify, You, contentious Deputies of the States-General, have probably not long to be here! But, in fine, all shall now withdraw for this day; and meet again, each Order in its separate place, tomorrow morning, for despatch of business. *This* is the determination of the royal breast: pithy and clear. And herewith King, retinue, Noblesse, majority of Clergy file out, as if the whole matter were satisfactorily completed.

These file out; through grim-silent seas of people. Only the Commons Deputies file not out; but stand there in gloomy silence, uncertain what they shall do. One man of them is certain; one man of them discerns and dares! It is now that King Mirabeau starts to the Tribune, and lifts up his lion-voice. Verily a word in season; for, in such scenes, the moment is the mother of ages! Had not Gabriel Honoré been there,—one can well fancy, how the Commons Deputies, affrighted at the perils which now yawned dim all round them, and waxing ever paler in each other's paleness, might very naturally, one after one, have *glided off*; and the whole course of European History have been different!

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[1] Dumont, *Souvenirs sur Mirabeau*, c. 4.

[2] *Histoire Parlementaire*, i. 13.

But he is there. List to the *brool* of that royal forest-voice; sorrowful, low; fast swelling to a roar! Eyes kindle at the glance of his eye:—National Deputies were missioned by a Nation; they have sworn an Oath; they—But lo! while the lion's voice roars loudest, what Apparition is this? Apparition of Mercurius de Brézé, muttering somewhat!—'Speak out,' cry several.—'Messieurs,' shrills De Brézé, repeating himself, 'You have heard the King's orders!'—Mirabeau glares on him with fire-flashing face; shakes the black lion's mane: 'Yes, Monsieur, we have heard what the King was advised to say: and you, who cannot be the interpreter of his orders to the States-General; you, who have neither place nor right of speech here; *you* are not the man to remind us of it. Go, Monsieur, tell those who sent you that we are here by the will of the People, and that nothing but the force of bayonets shall send us hence!'[1] And poor De Brézé shivers forth from the National Assembly;—and also (if it be not in one faintest glimmer, months later) finally from the page of History!—

Hapless De Brézé; doomed to survive long ages, in men's memory, in this faint way, with tremulent white rod! He was true to Etiquette, which was his Faith here below; a martyr to respect of persons. Short woollen cloaks could not kiss Majesty's hand as long velvet ones did. Nay lately, when the poor little Dauphin lay dead, and some ceremonial Visitation came, was he not punctual to announce it even to the Dauphin's *dead body*: 'Monseigneur, a Deputation of the States-General!'[2] *Sunt lachrymæ rerum.*

But what does the Œil-de-Bœuf, now when De Brézé shivers back thither? *Despatch* that same force of bayonets? Not so: the seas of people still hang multitudinous, intent on what is passing; nay rush and roll, loud-billowing, into the Courts of the Château itself; for a report has risen that Necker is to be dismissed. Worst of all, the Gardes Françaises seem indisposed to act: 'two Companies of them *do not fire* when ordered'![1] Necker, for not being at the *Séance*, shall be shouted for, carried home in triumph; and must not be dismissed. His Grace of Paris, on the other hand, has to fly with broken coach-panels, and owe his life to furious driving. The *Gardes-du-Corps* (Body-Guards), which you were drawing out, had better be drawn in again.[2] There is no sending of bayonets to be thought of.

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[1] *Moniteur* (*Hist. Parl.* ii. 22).

[2] Montgaillard, ii. 38.

Instead of soldiers, the Œil-de-Bœuf sends—carpenters, to take down the platform. Ineffectual shift! In few instants, the very carpenters cease wrenching and knocking at their platform; standing on it, hammer in hand, and listen open-mouthed.[3] The Third Estate is decreeing that it is, was, and will be, nothing but a National Assembly; and now, moreover, an inviolable one, all members of it inviolable: 'infamous, traitorous, towards the Nation, and guilty of capital crime, is any person, body-corporate, tribunal, court or commission that now or henceforth, during the present session or after it, shall dare to pursue, interrogate, arrest, or cause to be arrested, detain or cause to be detained, any' etc. etc. 'on *whose part soever* the same be commanded.'[4] Which done, one can wind up with this comfortable reflection from Abbé Sieyes: 'Messieurs, you are today what you were yesterday.'

Courtiers may shriek; but it is, and remains, even so. Their well-charged explosion has exploded *through the touch-hole*; covering themselves with scorches, confusion, and unseemly soot! Poor Triumvirate, poor Queen; and above all, poor Queen's Husband, who means well, had he any fixed meaning! Folly is that wisdom which is wise only behindhand. Few months ago these Thirty-five Concessions had filled France with a rejoicing, which might have lasted for several years. Now it is unavailing, the very mention of it slighted; Majesty's express orders set at nought.

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[1] *Histoire Parlementaire*, ii. 26.

[2] Bailly, i. 217.

[3] *Histoire Parlementaire*, ii. 23.

[4] Montgaillard, ii. 47.

All France is in a roar; a sea of persons, estimated at 'ten thousand,' whirls 'all this day in the Palais Royal.'[1] The remaining Clergy, and likewise some Forty-eight Noblesse, D'Orléans among them, have now forthwith gone over to the victorious Commons;—by whom, as is natural, they are received 'with acclamation.'

The Third Estate triumphs; Versailles Town shouting round it; ten thousand whirling all day in the Palais Royal; and all France standing a-tiptoe, not unlike whirling! Let the Œil-de-Bœuf look to it. As for King Louis, he will swallow his injuries; will temporise, keep silence; will at all costs have present peace. It was Tuesday the 23d of June, when he spoke that peremptory royal mandate; and the week is not done till he has written to the remaining obstinate Noblesse, that they also must oblige him, and give in. D'Espréménil rages his last; Barrel Mirabeau 'breaks his sword,' making a vow,—which he might as well have kept. The 'Triple Family' is now therefore complete; the third erring brother, the Noblesse, having joined it;—erring but pardonable; soothed, so far as possible, by sweet eloquence from President Bailly.

So triumphs the Third Estate; and States-General are become National Assembly; and all France may sing *Te Deum.* By wise inertia, and wise cessation of inertia, great victory has been gained. It is the last night of June: all night you meet nothing on the streets of Versailles but 'men running with torches,' with shouts and jubilation. From the 2d of May when they kissed the hand of Majesty, to this 30th of June when men run with torches, we count eight weeks and three days. For eight weeks the National Carroccio has stood far-seen, ringing many a signal; and, so much having now gathered round it, may hope to stand.

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[1] Arthur Young, i. 119.

CHAPTER III

BROGLIE THE WAR-GOD

The Court feels indignant that it is conquered; but what then? Another time it will do better. Mercury descended in vain; now has the time come for Mars.—The gods of the Œil-de-Bœuf have withdrawn into the darkness of their cloudy Ida; and sit there, shaping and forging what may be needful, be it 'billets of a new National Bank,' munitions of war, or things for ever inscrutable to men.

Accordingly, what means this 'apparatus of troops'? The National Assembly can get no furtherance for its Committee of Subsistences; can hear only that, at Paris, the Bakers' shops are besieged; that, in the Provinces, people are 'living on meal-husks and boiled grass.' But on all highways there hover dust-clouds, with the march of regiments, with the trailing of cannon: foreign Pandours, of fierce aspect; Salis-Samade, Esterhazy, Royal-Allemand; so many of them foreign; to the number of thirty thousand,—which fear can magnify to fifty: all wending towards Paris and Versailles! Already, on the heights of Montmartre, is a digging and delving; too like a scarping and trenching. The effluence of Paris is arrested Versailles-ward by a barrier of cannon at Sèvres Bridge. From the Queen's Mews, cannon stand pointed on the National-Assembly Hall itself. The National Assembly has its very slumbers broken by the tramp of soldiery, swarming and defiling, endless, or seemingly endless, all round those spaces, at dead of night, 'without drum-music, without audible word of command.'[1] What means it?

Shall eight, or even shall twelve Deputies, our Mirabeaus, Barnaves at the head of them, be whirled suddenly to the Castle of Ham; the rest ignominiously dispersed to the winds? No National Assembly can make the Constitution with cannon levelled on it from the Queen's Mews! What means this reticence of the Œil-de-Bœuf, broken only by nods and shrugs? In the mystery of that cloudy Ida, what is it that they forge and shape?—Such questions must distracted Patriotism keep asking, and receive no answer but an echo.

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[1] A. Lameth, *Assemblée Constituante*, i. 41.

Questions and echo bad enough in themselves:—and now, above all, while the hungry food-year, which runs from August to August, is getting older; becoming more and more a famine-year! With 'meal-husks and boiled grass,' Brigands may actually collect; and, in crowds, at farm and mansion, howl angrily, *Food! Food!* It is in vain to send soldiers against them: at sight of soldiers they disperse, they vanish as under ground; then directly reassemble elsewhere for new tumult and plunder. Frightful enough to look upon; but what to *hear* of, reverberated through Twenty-five Millions of suspicious minds! Brigands and Broglie, open Conflagration, preternatural Rumour are driving mad most hearts in France. What will the issue of these things be?

At Marseilles, many weeks ago, the Townsmen have taken arms; for 'suppressing of Brigands,' and other purposes: the military Commandant may make of it what he will. Elsewhere, everywhere, could not the like be done? Dubious, on the distracted Patriot Imagination, wavers, as a last deliverance, some foreshadow of a *National Guard.* But conceive, above all, the Wooden Tent in the Palais Royal! A universal hubbub there, as of dissolving worlds: there loudest bellows the mad, mad-making voice of Rumour; there sharpest gazes Suspicion into the pale dim World-Whirlpool; discerning shapes and phantasms: imminent bloodthirsty Regiments camped on the Champ-de-Mars; dispersed National Assembly; redhot cannon-balls (to burn Paris):—the mad War-god and Bellona's sounding thongs. To the calmest man it is becoming too plain that battle is inevitable.

Inevitable, silently nod Messeigneurs and Broglie: Inevitable and brief! Your National Assembly, stopped short in its Constitutional labours, may fatigue the royal ear with addresses and remonstrances: those cannon of ours stand duly levelled; those troops are here. The King's Declaration, with its Thirty-five too generous Articles, was spoken, was not listened to; but remains yet unrevoked: he himself shall effect it, *seul il fera*!

As for Broglie, he has his headquarters at Versailles, all as in a seat of war: clerks writing; significant staff-officers, inclined to taciturnity; plumed aides-de-camp, scouts, orderlies flying or hovering. He himself looks forth, important, impenetrable; listens to Besenval Commandant of Paris, and his warning and earnest counsels (for he has come out repeatedly on purpose), with a silent smile.[1] The Parisians resist? scornfully cry Messeigneurs. As a meal-mob may! They have sat quiet, these five generations, submitting to all. Their Mercier declared, in these very years, that a Parisian revolt was henceforth 'impossible.'[2] Stand by the royal Declaration, of the Twenty-third of June. The Nobles of France, valorous, chivalrous as of old, will rally round us with one heart;—and as for this which you call Third Estate, and which we call *canaille* of unwashed Sansculottes, of Patelins, Scribblers, factious Spouters,—brave Broglie, 'with a whiff of grapeshot (*salve de canons*),' if need be, will give quick account of it. Thus reason they: on their cloudy Ida; hidden from men,—men also hidden from them.

Good is grapeshot, Messeigneurs, on one condition: that the shooter also were made of metal! But unfortunately he is made of flesh; under his buffs and bandoleers your hired shooter has instincts, feelings, even a kind of thought. It is his kindred, bone of his bone, this same *canaille* that shall be whiffed; he has brothers in it, a father and mother,—living on meal-husks and boiled grass. His very doxy, not yet 'dead i' the spital,' drives him into military heterodoxy; declares that if he shed Patriot blood, he shall be accursed among men. The soldier, who has seen his pay stolen by rapacious Foulons, his blood wasted by Soubises, Pompadours, and the gates of promotion shut inexorably on him if he were not born noble,—is himself not without griefs against you. Your cause is not the soldier's cause; but, as would seem, your own only, and no other god's nor man's.

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[1] Besenval, iii. 398.

[2] Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*, vi. 22.

For example, the world may have heard how, at Béthune lately, when there rose some 'riot about grains,' of which sort there are so many, and the soldiers stood drawn out, and the word 'Fire!' was given,—not a trigger stirred; only the butts of all muskets rattled angrily against the ground; and the soldiers stood glooming, with a mixed expression of countenance;—till clutched 'each under the arm of a patriot householder,' they were all hurried off, in this manner, to be treated and caressed, and have their pay increased by subscription![1]

Neither have the Gardes Françaises, the best regiment of the line, shown any promptitude for street-firing lately. They returned grumbling from Réveillon's; and have not burnt a single cartridge since; nay, as we saw, not even when bid. A dangerous humour dwells in these Gardes. Notable men too, in their way! Valadi the Pythagorean was, at one time, an officer of theirs. Nay, in the ranks, under the three-cornered felt and cockade, what hard heads may there not be, and reflections going on,—unknown to the public! One head of the hardest we do now discern there: on the shoulders of a certain Sergeant Hoche. Lazare Hoche, that is the name of him; he used to be about the Versailles Royal Stables, nephew of a poor herbwoman; a handy lad; exceedingly addicted to reading. He is now Sergeant Hoche, and can rise no further: he lays out his pay in rushlights, and cheap editions of books.[2]

On the whole, the best seems to be: Consign these Gardes Françaises to their Barracks. So Besenval thinks, and orders.

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[1] *Histoire Parlementaire.*

[2] *Dictionnaire des Hommes Marquans*, Londres (Paris), 1800, ii. 198.

Consigned to their barracks, the Gardes Françaises do but form a 'Secret Association,' an Engagement not to act against the National Assembly. Debauched by Valadi the Pythagorean; debauched by money and women! cry Besenval and innumerable others. Debauched by what you will, or in need of no debauching, behold them, long files of them, their consignment broken, arrive, headed by their Sergeants, on the 26th day of June, at the Palais Royal! Welcomed with vivats, with presents, and a pledge of patriot liquor; embracing and embraced; declaring in words that the cause of France is their cause! Next day and the following days the like. What is singular too, except this patriot humour, and breaking of their consignment, they behave otherwise with 'the most rigorous accuracy.'[1]

They are growing questionable, these Gardes! Eleven ringleaders of them are put in the Abbaye Prison. It boots not in the least. The imprisoned Eleven have only, 'by the hand of an individual,' to drop, towards nightfall, a line in the Café de Foy; where Patriotism harangues loudest on its table. 'Two hundred young persons, soon waxing to four thousand,' with fit crowbars, roll towards the Abbaye; smite asunder the needful doors; and bear out their Eleven, with other military victims:—to supper in the Palais Royal Garden; to board, and lodging 'in camp-beds, in the *Théâtre des Variétés*'; other national *Prytaneum* as yet not being in readiness. Most deliberate! Nay so punctual were these young persons, that finding one military victim to have been imprisoned for real civil crime, they returned him to his cell, with protest.

Why new military force was not called out? New military force was called out. New military force did arrive, full gallop, with drawn sabre: but the people gently 'laid hold of their bridles'; the dragoons sheathed their swords; lifted their caps by way of salute, and sat like mere statues of dragoons,—except indeed that a drop of liquor being brought them, they 'drank to the King and Nation with the greatest cordiality.'[1]

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[1] Besenval, iii. 394-6.

And now, ask in return, why Messeigneurs and Broglie the great god of war, on seeing these things, did not pause, and take some other course, any other course? Unhappily, as we said, they could see nothing. Pride, which goes before a fall; wrath, if not reasonable, yet pardonable, most natural, had hardened their hearts and heated their heads: so, with imbecility and violence (ill-matched pair), they rush to seek their hour. All Regiments are not Gardes Françaises, or debauched by Valadi the Pythagorean: let fresh undebauched Regiments come up; let Royal-Allemand, Salis-Samade, Swiss Château-Vieux come up,—which can fight, but can hardly speak except in German gutturals; let soldiers march, and highways thunder with artillery-wagons: Majesty has a *new* Royal Session to hold,—and miracles to work there! The whiff of grapeshot can, if needful, become a blast and tempest.

In which circumstances, before the redhot balls begin raining, may not the Hundred-and-twenty Paris Electors, though their *Cahier* is long since finished, see good to meet again daily as, an 'Electoral Club'? They meet first 'in a Tavern';—where 'a large wedding-party' cheerfully gives place to them.[2] But latterly they meet in the *Hôtel-de-Ville*, in the Townhall itself. Flesselles, Provost of Merchants, with his Four Echevins (*Scabins*, Assessors), could not prevent it; such was the force of public opinion. He, with his Echevins, and the Six-and-Twenty Town-Councillors, all appointed from Above, may well sit silent there, in their long gowns; and consider, with awed eye, what prelude this is of convulsion coming from Below, and how they themselves shall fare in that!

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[1] *Histoire Parlementaire*, ii. 32.

[2] Dusaulx. *Prise de la Bastille* (*Collection des Mémoires*, par Berville et Barrière, Paris, 1821), p. 269.

CHAPTER IV

TO ARMS!

So hangs it, dubious, fateful, in the sultry days of July. It is the passionate printed *advice* of M. Marat, to abstain, of all things, from violence.[1] Nevertheless the hungry poor are already burning Town Barriers, where Tribute on eatables is levied; getting clamorous for food.

The twelfth July morning is Sunday: the streets are all placarded with an enormous-sized *De par le Roi*, 'inviting peaceable citizens to remain within doors,' to feel no alarm, to gather in no crowd. Why so? What mean these 'placards of enormous size'? Above all, what means this clatter of military; dragoons, hussars, rattling in from all points of the compass towards the Place Louis Quinze; with a staid gravity of face, though saluted with mere nicknames, hootings and even missiles?[2] Besenval is with them. Swiss Guards of his are already in the Champs Elysées, with four pieces of artillery.

Have the destroyers descended on us, then? From the Bridge of Sèvres to utmost Vincennes, from Saint-Denis to the Champ-de-Mars, we are begirt! Alarm, of the vague unknown, is in every heart. The Palais Royal has become a place of awestruck interjections, silent shakings of the head: one can fancy with what dolorous stound the noon-tide cannon (which the Sun fires at crossing of his meridian) went off there; bodeful, like an inarticulate voice of doom.[3] Are these troops verily come out 'against Brigands'? Where are the Brigands? What mystery is in the wind?—Hark! a human voice reporting articulately the Job's-news: *Necker, People's Minister, Saviour of France, is dismissed.* Impossible; incredible! Treasonous to the public peace! Such a voice ought to be choked in the water-works;[1]—had not the news-bringer quickly fled. Nevertheless, friends, make of it what you will, the news is true. Necker is gone. Necker hies northward incessantly, in obedient secrecy, since yesternight. We have a new Ministry: Broglie the War-god; Aristocrat Breteuil; Foulon who said the people might eat grass!

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[1] *Avis au Peuple, ou les Ministres dévoilés*, 1st July 1789 (in *Histoire Parlementaire*, ii. 37).

[2] Besenval, iii. 411.

[3] *Histoire Parlementaire*, ii. 81.

Rumour, therefore, shall arise; in the Palais Royal, and in broad France. Paleness sits on every face; confused tremor and fremescence; waxing into thunder-peals, of Fury stirred on by Fear.

But see Camille Desmoulins, from the Café de Foy, rushing out, sibylline in face; his hair streaming, in each hand a pistol! He springs to a table: the Police satellites are eyeing him; alive they shall not take him, not they alive him alive. This time he speaks without stammering:—Friends! shall we die like hunted hares? Like sheep hounded into their pinfold; bleating for mercy, where is no mercy, but only a whetted knife? The hour is come; the supreme hour of Frenchman and Man; when Oppressors are to try conclusions with Oppressed; and the word is, swift Death, or Deliverance for ever. Let such hour be *well*-come! Us, meseems, one cry only befits: To Arms! Let universal Paris, universal France, as with the throat of the whirlwind, sound only: To arms!—'To arms!' yell responsive the innumerable voices; like one great voice, as of a Demon yelling from the air: for all faces wax fire-eyed, all hearts burn up into madness. In such, or fitter words,[2] does Camille evoke the Elemental Powers, in this great moment.—Friends, continues Camille, some rallying-sign! Cockades; green ones;—the colour of

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[1] *Histoire Parlementaire*, ii. 81.

[2] *Vieux Cordelier*, par Camille Desmoulins, No. 5 (reprinted in *Collection des Mémoires*, par Baudouin Frères, Paris, 1825), p. 81.

Hope!—As with the flight of locusts, these green tree-leaves; green ribands from the neighbouring shops; all green things are snatched, and made cockades of. Camille descends from his table, 'stifled with embraces, wetted with tears'; has a bit of green riband handed him; sticks it in his hat. And now to Curtius' Image-shop there; to the Boulevards; to the four winds; and rest not till France be on fire!

France, so long shaken and wind-parched, is probably at the right inflammable point.—As for poor Curtius, who, one grieves to think, might be but imperfectly paid,—he cannot make two words about his Images. The Wax-bust of Necker, the Wax-bust of D'Orléans, helpers of France: these, covered with crape, as in funeral procession, or after the manner of suppliants appealing to Heaven, to Earth, and Tartarus itself, a mixed multitude bears off. For a sign! As indeed man, with his singular imaginative faculties, can do little or nothing without signs: thus Turks look to their Prophet's banner; also Osier *Mannikins* have been Burnt, and Necker's Portrait has erewhile figured, aloft on its perch.

In this manner march they, a mixed, continually increasing multitude; armed with axes, staves, and miscellanea; grim, many-sounding, through the streets. Be all Theatres shut; let all dancing, on planked floor, or on the natural greensward, cease! Instead of a Christian Sabbath, and feast of *guinguette* tabernacles, it shall be a Sorcerer's Sabbath; and Paris, gone rabid, dance,—with the Fiend for piper!

However, Besenval, with horse and foot, is in the Place Louis Quinze. Mortals promenading homewards, in the fall of the day, saunter by, from Chaillot or Passy, from flirtation and a little thin wine; with sadder step than usual. Will the Bust-Procession pass that way? Behold it; behold also Prince Lambesc dash forth on it, with his Royal-Allemands! Shots fall, and sabre-strokes; Busts are hewed asunder; and, alas, also heads of men. A sabred Procession has nothing for it but to *explode*, along what streets, alleys, Tuileries Avenues it finds; and disappear. One unarmed man lies hewed down;

a Garde Française by his uniform: bear him (or bear even the report of him) dead and gory to his Barracks;—where he has comrades still alive!

But why not now, victorious Lambesc, charge through that Tuileries Garden itself, where the fugitives are vanishing? Not show the Sunday promenaders too, how steel glitters, besprent with blood; that it be told of, and men's ears tingle? —Tingle, alas, they did; but the wrong way. Victorious Lambesc, in this his second or Tuileries charge, succeeds but in overturning (call it not slashing, for he struck with the flat of his sword) one man, a poor old schoolmaster, most pacifically tottering there; and is driven out, by barricade of chairs, by flights of 'bottles and glasses,' by execrations in bass voice and treble. Most delicate is the mob-queller's vocation; wherein Too-much may be as bad as Not-enough. For each of these bass voices, and more each treble voice, borne to all parts of the City, rings now nothing but distracted indignation; will ring all night. The cry, *To arms!* roars tenfold; steeples with their metal storm-voice boom out, as the sun sinks; armorers' shops are broken open, plundered; the streets are a living foam-sea, chafed by all the winds.

Such issue came of Lambesc's charge on the Tuileries Garden: no striking of salutary terror into Chaillot promenaders; a striking into broad wakefulness of Frenzy and the three Furies,—which otherwise were not asleep! For they lie always, those subterranean Eumenides (fabulous and yet so true), in the dullest existence of man;—and can dance, brandishing their dusky torches, shaking their serpent-hair. Lambesc with Royal-Allemand may ride to his barracks, with curses for his marching-music; then ride back again, like one troubled in mind: vengeful Gardes Françaises, *sacré*ing, with knit brows, start out on him, from their barracks in the Chaussé d'Antin; pour a volley into him (killing and wounding); which he must not answer, but ride on.[1]

Counsel dwells not under the plumed hat. If the Eumenides awaken, and Broglie has given no orders, what can a Besenval do? When the Gardes Françaises, with Palais-Royal volunteers, roll down, greedy of more vengeance, to the Place Louis Quinze itself, they find neither Besenval, Lambesc, Royal-Allemand, nor any soldier now there. Gone is military order. On the far Eastern Boulevard, of Saint-Antoine, the Chasseurs Normandie arrive, dusty, thirsty, after a hard day's ride; but can find no billet-master, see no course in this City of confusions; cannot get to Besenval, cannot so much as discover where he is: Normandie must even bivouac there, in its dust and thirst,—unless some patriot will treat it to a cup of liquor, with advices.

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[1] Weber, ii. 75-91.

Raging multitudes surround the Hôtel-de-Ville, crying: Arms! Orders! The Six-and-twenty Town-Councillors, with their long gowns, have ducked under (into the raging chaos);—shall never emerge more. Besenval is painfully wriggling himself out, to the Champ-de-Mars; he must sit there 'in the cruelest uncertainty': courier after courier may dash off for Versailles; but will bring back no answer, can hardly bring himself back. For the roads are all blocked with batteries and pickets, with floods of carriages arrested for examination: such was Broglie's one sole order; the Œil-de-Bœuf, hearing in the distance such mad din, which sounded almost like invasion, will before all things keep its own head whole. A new Ministry, with, as it were, but one foot in the stirrup, cannot take leaps. Mad Paris is abandoned altogether to itself.

What a Paris, when the darkness fell! A European metropolitan City hurled suddenly forth from its old combinations and arrangements; to crash tumultuously together, seeking new. Use and wont will now no longer direct any man; each man, with what of originality he has, must begin thinking; or following those that think. Seven hundred thousand individuals, on the sudden, find all their old paths, old ways of acting and deciding, vanish from under their feet. And so there go they, with clangour and terror, they know not as yet whether running, swimming or flying,—headlong into the New Era. With clangour and terror: from above, Broglie the war-god impends, preternatural, with his redhot cannon-balls; and from below, a preternatural Brigand-world menaces with dirk and firebrand: madness rules the hour.

Happily, in place of the submerged Twenty-six, the Electoral Club is gathering; has declared itself a 'Provisional Municipality.' On the morrow it will get Provost Flesselles, with an Echevin or two, to give help in many things. For the present it decrees one most essential thing: that forthwith a 'Parisian Militia' shall be enrolled. Depart, ye heads of Districts, to labour in this great work; while we here, in Permanent Committee, sit alert. Let fencible men, each party in its own range of streets, keep watch and ward, all night. Let Paris court a little fever-sleep; confused by such fever-dreams, of 'violent motions at the Palais Royal';—or from time to time start awake, and look out, palpitating, in its nightcap, at the clash of discordant mutually-unintelligible Patrols; on the gleam of distant Barriers, going up all-too ruddy towards the vault of Night.[1]

CHAPTER V

GIVE US ARMS

On Monday the huge City has awoke, not to its week-day industry: to what a different one! The working man has become a fighting man; has one want only: that of arms. The industry of all crafts has paused;—except it be the smith's, fiercely hammering pikes; and, in a faint degree, the kitchener's, cooking offhand victuals; for *bouche va toujours*. Women too are sewing cockades;—not now of *green*, which being D'Artois colour, the Hôtel-de-Ville has had to interfere in it; but of *red* and *blue*, our old Paris colours: these, once based on a ground of constitutional *white*, are the famed TRICOLOR,—which (if Prophecy err not) 'will go round the world.'

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[1] *Deux Amis*, i. 267-306.

All shops, unless it be the Bakers' and Vintners', are shut: Paris is in the streets;—rushing, foaming like some Venice wine-glass into which you had dropped poison. The tocsin, by order, is pealing madly from all steeples. Arms, ye Elector Municipals; thou Flesselles with thy Echevins, give us arms! Flesselles gives what he can: fallacious, perhaps insidious promises of arms from Charleville; order to seek arms here, order to seek them there. The new Municipals give what they can; some three hundred and sixty indifferent firelocks, the equipment of the City-Watch: 'a man in wooden shoes, and without coat, directly clutches one of them, and mounts guard.' Also as hinted, an order to all Smiths to make pikes with their whole soul.

Heads of Districts are in fervent consultation; subordinate Patriotism roams distracted, ravenous for arms. Hitherto at the Hôtel-de-Ville was only such modicum of indifferent firelocks as we have seen. At the so-called Arsenal, there lies nothing but rust, rubbish and saltpetre,—overlooked too by the guns of the Bastille. His Majesty's Repository, what they call *Garde-Meuble*, is forced and ransacked: tapestries enough, and gauderies; but of serviceable fighting-gear small stock! Two silver-mounted cannons there are; an ancient gift from his Majesty of Siam to Louis Fourteenth: gilt sword of the Good Henri; antique Chivalry arms and armour. These, and such as these, a necessitous Patriotism snatches greedily, for want of better. The Siamese cannons go trundling, on an errand they were not meant for. Among the indifferent firelocks are seen tourney-lances; the princely helm and hauberk glittering amid ill-hatted heads,—as in a time when all times and their possessions are suddenly sent jumbling!

At the *Maison de Saint-Lazare*, Lazar-House once, now a Correction-House with Priests, there was no trace of arms;

but, on the other hand, corn, plainly to a culpable extent. Out with it, to market; in this scarcity of grains!—Heavens, will 'fifty-two carts,' in long row, hardly carry it to the *Halle aux Bleds?* Well, truly, ye reverend Fathers, was your pantry filled; fat are your larders; over-generous your wine-bins, ye plotting exasperators of the Poor; traitorous forestallers of bread!

Vain is protesting, entreaty on bare knees: the House of Saint-Lazarus has that in it which comes not out by protesting. Behold, how, from every window, it *vomits*: mere torrents of furniture, of bellowing and hurlyburly;—the cellars also leaking wine. Till, as was natural, smoke rose,—kindled, some say, by the desperate Saint-Lazaristes themselves, desperate of other riddance; and the Establishment vanished from this world in flame. Remark nevertheless that 'a thief' (set on or not by Aristocrats), being detected there, is 'instantly hanged.'

Look also at the Châtelet Prison. The Debtors' Prison of La Force is broken from without; and they that sat in bondage to Aristocrats go free: hearing of which the Felons at the Châtelet do likewise 'dig up their pavements,' and stand on the offensive; with the best prospects,—had not Patriotism, passing that way, 'fired a volley' into the Felon world; and crushed it down again under hatches. Patriotism consorts not with thieving and felony: surely also Punishment, this day, hitches (if she still hitch) after Crime, with frightful shoes-of-swiftness! 'Some score or two' of wretched persons, found prostrate with drink in the cellars of that Saint-Lazare, are indignantly haled to prison; the Jailor has no room; whereupon, other place of security not suggesting itself, it is written, '*on les pendit*, they hanged them.'[1] Brief is the word; not without significance, be it true or untrue!

In such circumstances, the Aristocrat, the unpatriotic rich man is packing-up for departure. But he shall not get departed. A wooden-shod force has seized all Barriers, burnt or not: all that enters, all that seeks to issue, is stopped there, and dragged to the Hôtel-de-Ville: coaches, tumbrils, plate, furniture, 'many meal-sacks,' in time even 'flocks and herds' encumber the Place de Grève.[1]

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[1] *Histoire Parlementaire*, ii. 96.

And so it roars, and rages, and brays; drums beating, steeples pealing; criers rushing with hand-bells: 'Oyez, oyez, All men to their Districts to be enrolled!' The Districts have met in gardens, open squares; are getting marshalled into volunteer troops. No redhot ball has yet fallen from Besenval's Camp; on the contrary, Deserters with their arms are continually dropping in: nay now, joy of joys, at two in the afternoon, the Gardes Françaises, being ordered to Saint-Denis, and flatly declining, have come over in a body! It is a fact worth many. Three thousand six hundred of the best fighting men, with complete accoutrement; with cannoneers even, and cannon! Their officers are left standing alone; could not so much as succeed in 'spiking the guns.' The very Swiss, it may now be hoped, Château-Vieux and the others, will have doubts about fighting.

Our Parisian Militia,—which some think it were better to name National Guard,—is prospering as heart could wish. It promised to be forty-eight thousand; but will in few hours double and quadruple that number: invincible, if we had only arms!

But see, the promised Charleville Boxes, marked *Artillerie*! Here, then, are arms enough?—Conceive the blank face of Patriotism, when it found them filled with rags, foul linen, candle-ends, and bits of wood! Provost of the Merchants, how is this? Neither at the Chartreux Convent, whither we were sent with signed order, is there or ever was there any weapon of war. Nay here, in this Seine Boat, safe under tarpaulings (had not the nose of Patriotism been of the finest), are 'five thousand-weight of gunpowder'; not coming *in*, but surreptitiously going out! What meanest thou, Flesselles?

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[1] Dusaulx, *Prise de la Bastille*, p. 290.

'Tis a ticklish game, that of 'amusing' us. Cat plays with captive mouse: but mouse with enraged cat, with enraged National Tiger?

Meanwhile, the faster, O ye black-aproned Smiths, smite; with strong arm and willing heart. This man and that, all stroke from head to heel, shall thunder alternating, and ply the great forge-hammer, till stithy reel and ring again; while ever and anon, overhead, booms the alarm-cannon,—for the City has now got gunpowder. Pikes are fabricated; fifty thousand of them, in six-and-thirty hours: judge whether the Black-aproned have been idle. Dig trenches, unpave the streets, ye others, assiduous, man and maid; cram the earth in barrel-barricades, at each of them a volunteer sentry; pile the whinstones in window-sills and upper rooms. Have scalding pitch, at least boiling water ready, ye weak old women, to pour it and dash it on Royal-Allemand, with your old skinny arms: your shrill curses along with it will not be wanting! —Patrols of the newborn National Guard, bearing torches, scour the streets, all that night; which otherwise are vacant, yet illuminated in every window by order. Strange-looking; like some naphtha-lighted City of the Dead, with here and there a flight of perturbed Ghosts.

O poor mortals, how ye make this Earth bitter for each other; this fearful and wonderful Life fearful and horrible; and Satan has his place in all hearts! Such agonies and ragings and wailings ye have, and have had, in all times:—to be buried all, in so deep silence; and the salt sea is not swoln with your tears.

Great meanwhile is the moment, when tidings of Freedom reach us; when the long-enthralled soul, from amid its chains and squalid stagnancy, arises, were it still only in blindness and bewilderment, and swears by Him that made it, that it will be *free*! Free? Understand that well, it is the deep commandment, dimmer or clearer, of our whole being, to be *free*. Freedom is the one purport, wisely aimed at, or unwisely, of all man's struggles, toilings and sufferings, in this Earth. Yes, supreme is such a moment (if thou have known it): first vision as of a flame-girt Sinai, in this our waste Pilgrimage,—which thenceforth wants not its pillar of cloud by day, and pillar of fire by night! Something it is even,—nay, something considerable, when the chains have grown *corrosive*, poisonous,—to be free 'from oppression by our fellow-man.' Forward, ye maddened sons of France; be it towards this destiny or towards that! Around you is but starvation, falsehood, corruption and the clam of death. Where ye are is no abiding.

Imagination may, imperfectly, figure how Commandant Besenval, in the Champ-de-Mars, has worn out these sorrowful hours. Insurrection raging all round; his men melting away! From Versailles, to the most pressing messages, comes no answer; or once only some vague word of answer which is worse than none. A Council of Officers can decide merely that there is no decision: Colonels inform him, 'weeping,' that they do not think their men will fight. Cruel uncertainty is here: war-god Broglie sits yonder, inaccessible in his Olympus; does not descend terror-clad, does not produce his whiff of grapeshot; sends no orders.

Truly, in the Château of Versailles all seems mystery: in the Town of Versailles, were we there, all is rumour, alarm and indignation. An august National Assembly sits, to appearance, menaced with death; endeavouring to defy death. It has resolved 'that Necker carries with him the regrets of the Nation.' It has sent solemn Deputation over to the Château, with entreaty to have these troops withdrawn. In vain: his Majesty, with a singular composure, invites us to be busy rather with our own duty, making the Constitution! Foreign Pandours, and suchlike, go pricking and prancing, with a swashbuckler air; with an eye too probably to the *Salle des Menus*,—were it not for the 'grim-looking countenances' that crowd all avenues there.[1] Be firm, ye National Senators; the cynosure of a firm, grim-looking people!

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[1] See Lameth; Ferrieres, etc.

The august National Senators determine that there shall, at least, be Permanent Session till this thing end. Wherein however, consider that worthy Lafranc de Pompignan, our new President, whom we have named Bailly's successor, is an old man, wearied with many things. He is the Brother of that Pompignan who meditated lamentably on the Book of *Lamentations*:

Savez-vous pourquoi Jérémie
Se lamentait toute sa vie?
C'est qu'il prévoyait
Que Pompignan le traduirait!

Poor Bishop Pompignan withdraws; having got Lafayette for helper or substitute: this latter, as nocturnal Vice-President, with a thin house in disconsolate humour, sits sleepless, with lights unsnuffed;—waiting what the hours will bring.

So at Versailles. But at Paris, agitated Besenval, before retiring for the night, has stept over to old M. de Sombreuil, of the *Hôtel des Invalides* hard by. M. de Sombreuil has, what is a great secret, some eight-and-twenty thousand stand of muskets deposited in his cellars there; but no trust in the temper of his Invalides. This day, for example, he sent twenty of the fellows down to unscrew those muskets; lest Sedition might snatch at them: but scarcely, in six hours, had the twenty unscrewed twenty gun-locks, or dogsheads (*chiens*) of locks,—each Invalide his dogshead! If ordered to fire, they would, he imagines, turn their cannon against himself.

Unfortunate old military gentlemen, it is your hour, not of glory! Old Marquis de Launay too, of the Bastille, has pulled up his drawbridges long since, 'and retired into his interior'; with sentries walking on his battlements, under the midnight sky, aloft over the glare of illuminated Paris;—whom a National Patrol, passing that way, takes the liberty of firing at: 'seven shots towards twelve at night,' which do not take effect.[1] This was the 13th day of July 1789; a worse day,

[1] *Deux Amis de la Liberté*, i. 312.

many said, than the last 13th was, when only hail fell out of Heaven, not madness rose out of Tophet, ruining worse than crops!

In these same days, as Chronology will teach us, hot old Marquis Mirabeau lies stricken down, at Argenteuil,—*not* within sound of these alarm-guns; for *he* properly is not there, and only the body of him now lies, deaf and cold for ever. It was on Saturday night that he, drawing his last life-breaths, gave up the ghost there;—leaving a world, which would never go to his mind, now broken out, seemingly, into deliration and the *culbute générale*. What is it to him, departing elsewhither, on his long journey? The old Château Mirabeau stands silent, far off, on its scarped rock, in that 'gorge of two windy valleys'; the pale-fading spectre now of a Château: this huge World-riot, and France, and the World itself, fades also, like a shadow on the great still mirror-sea; and all shall be as God wills.

Young Mirabeau, sad of heart, for he loved this crabbed brave old Father; sad of heart, and occupied with sad cares,—is withdrawn from Public History. The great crisis transacts itself without him.[1]

CHAPTER VI

STORM AND VICTORY

But, to the living and the struggling, a new, Fourteenth morning dawns. Under all roofs of this distracted City is the nodus of a drama, not untragical, crowding towards solution. The bustlings and preparings, the tremors and menaces; the tears that fell from old eyes! This day, my sons, ye shall quit you like men. By the memory of your fathers' wrongs, by the hope of your children's rights! Tyranny impends in red wrath: help for you is none, if not in your own right hands. This day ye must do or die.

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[1] Fils Adoptif, *Mirabeau*, vi. l. 1.

From earliest light, a sleepless Permanent Committee has heard the old cry, now waxing almost frantic, mutinous: Arms! Arms! Provost Flesselles, or what traitors there are among you, may think of those Charleville Boxes. A hundred-and-fifty-thousand of us; and but the third man furnished with so much as a pike! Arms are the one thing needful: with arms we are an unconquerable man-defying National Guard; without arms, a rabble to be whiffed with grapeshot.

Happily the word has arisen, for no secret can be kept,—that there lie muskets at the *Hôtel des Invalides*. Thither will we: King's Procureur M. Ethys de Corny, and whatsoever of authority a Permanent Committee can lend, shall go with us. Besenval's Camp is there; perhaps he will not fire on us; if he kill us, we shall but die.

Alas, poor Besenval, with his troops melting away in that manner, has not the smallest humour to fire! At five o'clock this morning, as he lay dreaming, oblivious in the *Ecole Militaire*, a 'figure' stood suddenly at his bedside; 'with face rather handsome; eyes inflamed, speech rapid and curt, air audacious': such a figure drew Priam's curtains! The message and monition of the figure was, that resistance would be hopeless; that if blood flowed, wo to him who shed it. Thus spoke the figure: and vanished. 'Withal there was a kind of eloquence that struck one.' Besenval admits that he should have arrested him, but did not.[1] Who this figure with inflamed eyes, with speech rapid and curt, might be? Besenval knows, but mentions not. Camille Desmoulins? Pythagorean Marquis Valadi, inflamed with 'violent motions all night at the Palais Royal'? Fame names him 'Young M. Meillar';[2] then shuts her lips about him for ever.

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[1] Besenval, iii. 414.

[2] *Tableaux de la Révolution, Prise de la Bastille* (a folio Collection of Pictures and Portraits, with letter-press, not always uninstructive,—part of it said to be by Chamfort).

In any case, behold, about nine in the morning, our National Volunteers rolling in long wide flood south-westward to the *Hôtel des Invalides*; in search of the one thing needful. King's Procureur M. Ethys de Corny and officials are there; the Curé of Saint-Etienne du Mont marches unpacific at the head of his militant Parish; the Clerks of the Basoche in red coats we see marching, now Volunteers of the Basoche; the Volunteers of the Palais Royal:—National Volunteers, numerable by tens of thousands; of one heart and mind. The King's muskets are the Nation's; think, old M. de Sombreuil, how, in this extremity, thou wilt refuse them! Old M. de Sombreuil would fain hold parley, send couriers; but it skills not: the walls are scaled, no Invalide firing a shot; the gates must be flung open. Patriotism rushes in, tumultuous, from grunsel up to ridge-tile, through all rooms and passages; rummaging distractedly for arms. What cellar, or what cranny can escape it? The arms are found; all safe there; lying packed in straw,—apparently with a view to being burnt! More ravenous than famishing lions over dead prey, the multitude, with clangour and vociferation, pounces on them; struggling, dashing, clutching:—to the jamming-up, to the pressure, fracture and probable extinction of the weaker Patriot.[1] And so, with such protracted crash of deafening, most discordant Orchestra-music, the Scene is changed; and eight-and-twenty thousand sufficient firelocks are on the shoulders of as many National Guards, lifted thereby out of darkness into fiery light.

Let Besenval look at the glitter of these muskets, as they flash by! Gardes Françaises, it is said, have cannon levelled on him; ready to open, if need were, from the other side of the River.[2] Motionless sits he; 'astonished,' one may flatter oneself, 'at the proud bearing (*fière contenance*) of the Parisians.'—And now, to the Bastille, ye intrepid Parisians! There grapeshot still threatens: thither all men's thoughts and steps are now tending.

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[1] *Deux Amis*, i. 302.

[2] Besenval, iii. 416.

Old De Launay, as we hinted, withdrew 'into his interior' soon after midnight of Sunday. He remains there ever since, hampered, as all military gentlemen now are, in the saddest conflict of uncertainties. The Hôtel-de-Ville 'invites' him to admit National Soldiers, which is a soft name for surrendering. On the other hand, His Majesty's orders were precise. His garrison is but eighty-two old Invalides, reinforced by thirty-two young Swiss; his walls indeed are nine feet thick, he has cannon and powder; but, alas, only one day's provision of victuals. The city too is French, the poor garrison mostly French. Rigorous old De Launay, think what thou wilt do!

All morning, since nine, there has been a cry everywhere: To the Bastille! Repeated 'deputations of citizens' have been here, passionate for arms; whom De Launay has got dismissed by soft speeches through portholes. Towards noon, Elector Thuriot de la Rosière gains admittance; finds De Launay indisposed for surrender; nay disposed for blowing up the place rather. Thuriot mounts with him to the battlements: heaps of paving-stones, old iron and missiles lie piled; cannon all duly levelled; in every embrasure a cannon,—only drawn back a little! But outwards, behold, O Thuriot, how the multitude flows on, welling through every street: tocsin furiously pealing, all drums beating the *générale*: the Suburb Saint-Antoine rolling hitherward wholly, as one man! Such vision (spectral yet real) thou, O Thuriot, as from thy Mount of Vision, beholdest in this moment: prophetic of what other Phantasmagories, and loud-gibbering Spectral Realities, which thou yet beholdest not, but shalt! '*Que voulez-vous?*' said De Launay, turning pale at the sight, with an air of reproach, almost of menace. 'Monsieur,' said Thuriot, rising into the moral-sublime, 'what mean *you?* Consider if I could not precipitate *both* of us from this height,'—say only a hundred feet, exclusive of the walled ditch! Whereupon De Launay fell silent. Thuriot shows himself from some pinnacle, to comfort the multitude becoming suspicious, fremescent: then descends; departs with protest; with warning addressed also to the Invalides,—on whom, however, it produces but a mixed indistinct impression. The old heads are none of the clearest; besides, it is said, De Launay has been profuse of beverages (*prodigua des buissons*). They think, they will not fire,—if not fired on, if they can help it; but must, on the whole, be ruled considerably by circumstances.

Wo to thee, De Launay, in such an hour, if thou canst not, taking some one firm decision, *rule* circumstances! Soft speeches will not serve; hard grapeshot is questionable; but hovering between the two is *un*questionable. Ever wilder swells the tide of men; their infinite hum waxing ever louder, into imprecations, perhaps into crackle of stray musketry,—which latter, on walls nine feet thick, cannot do execution. The Outer Drawbridge has been lowered for Thuriot; new *deputation of citizens* (it is the third, and noisiest of all) penetrates that way into the Outer Court: soft speeches producing no clearance of these, De Launay gives fire; pulls up his Drawbridge. A slight sputter;—which has *kindled* the too combustible chaos; made it a roaring fire-chaos! Bursts forth Insurrection, at sight of its own blood (for there were deaths by that sputter of fire), into endless rolling explosion of musketry, distraction, execration;—and over head, from the Fortress, let one great gun, with its grapeshot, go booming, to show what we *could* do. The Bastille is besieged!

On, then, all Frenchmen, that have hearts in your bodies! Roar with all your throats, of cartilage and metal, ye Sons of Liberty; stir spasmodically whatsoever of utmost faculty is in you, soul, body, or spirit; for it is the hour! Smite, thou Louis Tournay, cartwright of the Marais, old-soldier of the Regiment Dauphiné; smite at that Outer Drawbridge chain, though the fiery hail whistles round thee! Never, over nave or felloe, did thy axe strike such a stroke. Down with it, man; down with it to Orcus: let the whole accursed Edifice sink thither, and Tyranny be swallowed up for ever! Mounted, some say, on the roof of the guard-room, some 'on bayonets stuck into joints of the wall,' Louis Tournay smites, brave Aubin Bonnemère (also an old soldier) seconding him: the chain yields, breaks; the huge Drawbridge slams down, thundering (*avec fracas*). Glorious: and yet, alas, it is still but the outworks. The Eight grim Towers, with their Invalide musketry, their paving-stones and cannon-mouths, still soar aloft intact;—Ditch yawning impassable, stone-faced; the inner Drawbridge with its *back* towards us: the Bastille is still to take!

To describe this Siege of the Bastille (thought to be one of the most important in History) perhaps transcends the talent of mortals. Could one but, after infinite reading, get to understand so much as the plan of the building! But there is open Esplanade, at the end of the Rue Saint-Antoine; there are such Forecourts, *Cour Avancé*, *Cour de l'Orme*, arched Gateway (where Louis Tournay now fights); then new drawbridges, dormant-bridges, rampart-bastions, and the grim Eight Towers: a labyrinthic Mass, high-frowning there, of all ages from twenty years to four hundred and twenty;—beleaguered, in this its last hour, as we said, by mere Chaos come again! Ordnance of all calibres; throats of all capacities; men of all plans, every man his own engineer: seldom since the war of Pygmies and Cranes was there seen so anomalous a thing. Half-pay Elie is home for a suit of regimentals; no one would heed him in coloured clothes: half-pay Hulin is haranguing Gardes Françaises in the Place de Grève. Frantic Patriots pick up the grapeshots; bear them, still hot (or seemingly so), to the Hôtel-de-Ville:—Paris, you perceive, is to be burnt! Flesselles is 'pale to the very lips'; for the roar of the multitude grows deep. Paris wholly has got to the acme of its frenzy; whirled, all ways, by panic madness. At every street-barricade, there whirls simmering a minor whirlpool,—strengthening the barricade, since God knows what is coming; and all minor whirlpools play distractedly into that grand Fire-Mahlstrom which is lashing round the Bastille.

And so it lashes and it roars. Cholat the wine-merchant has become an impromptu cannoneer. See Georget, of the Marine Service, fresh from Brest, ply the King of Siam's cannon. Singular (if we were not used to the like): Georget lay, last night, taking his ease at his inn; the King of Siam's cannon also lay, knowing nothing of *him*, for a hundred years. Yet now, at the right instant, they have got together, and discourse eloquent music. For, hearing what was toward, Georget sprang from the Brest Diligence, and ran. Gardes Françaises also will be here, with real artillery: were not the walls so thick!—Upwards from the Esplanade, horizontally from all neighbouring roofs and windows, flashes one irregular deluge of musketry, without effect. The Invalides lie flat, firing comparatively at their ease from behind stone; hardly through portholes show the tip of a nose. We fall, shot; and make no impression!

Let conflagration rage; of whatsoever is combustible! Guard-rooms are burnt, Invalides mess-rooms. A distracted 'Peruke-maker with two fiery torches' is for burning 'the saltpetres of the Arsenal';—had not a woman run screaming; had not a Patriot, with some tincture of Natural Philosophy, instantly struck the wind out of him (butt of musket on pit of stomach), overturned barrels, and stayed the devouring element. A young beautiful lady, seized escaping in these Outer Courts, and thought falsely to be De Launay's daughter, shall be burnt in De Launay's sight; she lies swooned on a paillasse: but again a Patriot, it is brave Aubin Bonnemère the old soldier, dashes in, and rescues her. Straw is burnt; three cartloads of it, hauled thither, go up in white smoke: almost to the choking of Patriotism itself; so that Elie had, with singed brows, to drag back one cart; and Réole the 'gigantic haberdasher' another. Smoke as of Tophet; confusion as of Babel; noise as of the Crack of Doom!

Blood flows; the aliment of new madness. The wounded are carried into houses of the Rue Cerisaie; the dying leave their last mandate not to yield till the accursed Stronghold fall. And yet, alas, how fall? The walls are so thick! Deputations, three in number, arrive from the Hôtel-de-Ville; Abbé Fauchet (who was of one) can say, with what almost superhuman courage of benevolence.[1] These wave their Town-flag in the arched Gateway; and stand, rolling their drum; but to no purpose. In such Crack of Doom, De Launay cannot hear them, dare not believe them: they return, with justified rage, the whew of lead still singing in their ears. What to do? The Firemen are here, squirting with their fire-pumps on the Invalides cannon, to wet the touchholes; they unfortunately cannot squirt so high; but produce only clouds of spray. Individuals of classical knowledge propose *catapults*. Santerre, the sonorous Brewer of the Suburb Saint-Antoine, advises rather that the place be fired, by a 'mixture of phosphorus and oil-of-turpentine spouted up through forcing-pumps': O Spinola-Santerre, hast thou the mixture *ready*? Every man his own engineer! And still the fire-deluge abates not: even women are firing, and Turks; at least one woman (with her sweetheart), and one Turk.[2] Gardes Françaises have come: real cannon, real cannoneers. Usher Maillard is busy; half-pay Elie. half-pay Hulin rage in the midst of thousands.

How the great Bastille Clock ticks (inaudible) in its Inner Court there, at its ease, hour after hour, as if nothing special, for it or the world, were passing! It tolled One when the firing began; and is now pointing towards Five, and still the firing slakes not.—Far down, in their vaults, the seven Prisoners hear muffled din as of earthquakes; their Turnkeys answer vaguely.

Wo to thee, De Launay, with thy poor hundred Invalides! Broglie is distant, and his ears heavy: Besenval hears, but can send no help. One poor troop of Hussars has crept, reconnoitering, cautiously along the Quais, as far as the Pont Neuf. 'We are come to join you,' said the Captain; for the crowd seems shoreless. A large-headed dwarfish individual, of smoke-bleared aspect, shambles forward, opening his blue lips, for there is sense in him; and croaks: 'Alight then, and give up your arms!' The Hussar-Captain is too happy to be escorted to the Barriers, and dismissed on parole. Who the squat individual was? Men answer, It is M. Marat, author of the excellent pacific *Avis au Peuple*! Great truly, O thou remarkable Dogleech, is this thy day of emergence and new-birth: and yet this same day come four years—!—But let the curtains of the Future hang.

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[1] Fauchet's *Narrative* (*Deux Amis*, i. 324).

[2] *Deux Amis*, i. 319; Dusaulx, etc.

What shall De Launay do? One thing only De Launay could have done: what he said he would do. Fancy him sitting, from the first, with lighted taper, within arm's-length of the Powder-Magazine; motionless, like old Roman Senator, or Bronze Lamp-holder; coldly apprising Thuriot, and all men, by a slight motion of his eye, what his resolution was:—Harmless he sat there, while unharmed; but the King's Fortress, meanwhile, could, might, would, or should in nowise be surrendered, save to the King's Messenger: one old man's life is worthless, so it be lost with honour; but think, ye brawling *canaille*, how will it be when a whole Bastille springs skyward!—In such statuesque, taper-holding attitude, one fancies De Launay might have left Thuriot, the red Clerks of the Basoche, Curé of Saint-Stephen and all the tagrag-and-bobtail of the world, to work their will.

And yet, withal, he could not do it. Hast thou considered how each man's heart is so tremulously responsive to the hearts of all men; hast thou noted how omnipotent is the very sound of many men? How their shriek of indignation palsies the strong soul; their howl of contumely withers with unfelt pangs? The Ritter Gluck confessed that the ground-tone of the noblest passage, in one of his noblest Operas, was the voice of the Populace he had heard at Vienna, crying to their Kaiser: Bread! Bread! Great is the combined voice of men; the utterance of their *instincts*, which are truer than their *thoughts*: it is the greatest a man encounters, among the sounds and shadows which make up this World of Time. He who can resist that, has his footing somewhere *beyond* Time. De Launay could not do it. Distracted, he hovers between two; hopes in the middle of despair; surrenders not his Fortress; declares that he will blow it up, seizes torches to blow it up, and does not blow it. Unhappy old De Launay, it is the death-agony of thy Bastille and thee! Jail, Jailoring and Jailor, all three, such as they may have been, must finish.

For four hours now has the World-Bedlam roared: call it the World-Chimæra, blowing fire! The poor Invalides have sunk under their battlements, or rise only with reversed muskets: they have made a white flag of napkins; go beating the *chamade*, or seeming to beat, for one can hear nothing. The very Swiss at the Portcullis look weary of firing; disheartened in the fire-deluge: a porthole at the drawbridge is opened, as by one that would speak. See Huissier Maillard, the shifty man! On his plank, swinging over the abyss of that stone Ditch; plank resting on parapet, balanced by weight of Patriots,—he hovers perilous: such a Dove towards such an Ark! Deftly, thou shifty Usher: one man already fell; and lies smashed, far down there, against the masonry! Usher Maillard falls not: deftly, unerring he walks, with outspread palm. The Swiss holds a paper through his porthole; the shifty Usher snatches it, and returns. Terms of surrender: Pardon, immunity to all! Are they accepted?—'*Foi d'officier*, On the word of an officer,' answers half-pay Hulin,—or half-pay Elie, for men do not agree on it,—'they are!' Sinks the drawbridge,—Usher Maillard bolting it when down; rushes-in the living deluge: the Bastille is fallen! *Victoire! La Bastille est prise!*[1]

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[1] *Histoire de la Révolution*, par Deux Amis de la Liberté, i. 267-306; Besenval, iii. 410-434; Dusaulx, *Prise de la Bastille*, 291-301; Bailly, *Memoires* (*Collection de Berville et Barrière*), i. 322 et seqq.

CHAPTER VII

NOT A REVOLT

WHY dwell on what follows? Hulin's *foi d'officier* should have been kept, but could not. The Swiss stand drawn up, disguised in white canvas smocks; the Invalides without disguise; their arms all piled against the wall. The first rush of victors, in ecstasy that the death-peril is passed, 'leaps joyfully on their necks'; but new victors rush, and ever new, also in ecstasy not wholly of joy. As we said, it was a living deluge, plunging headlong: had not the Gardes Françaises, in their cool military way, 'wheeled round with arms levelled,' it would have plunged suicidally, by the hundred or the thousand, into the Bastille-ditch.

And so it goes plunging through court and corridor; billowing uncontrollable, firing from windows—on itself; in hot frenzy of triumph, of grief and vengeance for its slain. The poor Invalides will fare ill; one Swiss, running off in his white smock, is driven back, with a death-thrust. Let all Prisoners be marched to the Townhall, to be judged!—Alas, already one poor Invalide has his right hand slashed off him; his maimed body dragged to the Place de Grève, and hanged there. This same right hand, it is said, turned back De Launay from the Powder-Magazine, and saved Paris.

De Launay, 'discovered in grey frock with poppy-coloured riband,' is for killing himself with the sword of his cane. He shall to the Hôtel-de-Ville; Hulin, Maillard and others escorting him; Elie marching foremost 'with the capitulation-paper on his sword's point.' Through roarings and cursings; through hustlings, clutchings, and at last through strokes! Your escort is hustled aside, felled down; Hulin sinks exhausted on a heap of stones. Miserable De Launay! He shall never enter the Hôtel-de-Ville: only his 'bloody hair-queue, held up in a bloody hand'; that shall enter, for a sign. The bleeding trunk lies on the steps there; the head is off through the streets; ghastly, aloft on a pike.

Rigorous De Launay has died; crying out, 'O friends, kill me fast!' Merciful De Losme must die; though Gratitude embraces him, in this fearful hour, and will die for him; it avails not. Brothers, your wrath is cruel! Your Place de Grève is become a Throat of the Tiger; full of mere fierce bellowings, and thirst of blood. One other officer is massacred; one other Invalide is hanged on the Lamp-iron; with difficulty, with generous perseverance, the Gardes Françaises will save the rest. Provost Flesselles, stricken long since with the paleness of death, must descend from his seat, 'to be judged at the Palais Royal':—alas, to be shot dead, by an unknown hand, at the turning of the first street!—

O evening sun of July, how, at this hour, thy beams fall slant on reapers amid peaceful woody fields; on old women spinning in cottages; on ships far out in the silent main; on Balls at the Orangerie of Versailles, where high-rouged Dames of the Palace are even now dancing with double-jacketed Hussar-Officers;—and also on this roaring Hell-porch of a Hôtel-de-Ville! Babel Tower, with the confusion of tongues, were not Bedlam added with the conflagration of thoughts, was no type of it. One forest of distracted steel bristles, endless, in front of an Electoral Committee; points itself, in horrid radii, against this and the other accused breast. It was the Titans warring with Olympus; and they, scarcely crediting it, have *conquered*: prodigy of prodigies; delirious, —as it could not but be. Denunciation, vengeance; blaze of triumph on a dark ground of terror; all outward, all inward things fallen into one general wreck of madness!

Electoral Committee? Had it a thousand throats of brass, it would not suffice. Abbé Lefevre, in the Vaults down below, is black as Vulcan, distributing that 'five thousand-weight of Powder'; with what perils, these eight-and-forty hours! Last night, a Patriot, in liquor, insisted on sitting to smoke on the edge of one of the Powder-barrels: there smoked he, independent of the world,—till the Abbé 'purchased his pipe for three francs,' and pitched it far.

Elie, in the Grand Hall, Electoral Committee looking on, sits 'with drawn sword bent in three places'; with battered helm, for he was of the Queen's Regiment, Cavalry; with torn regimentals, face singed and soiled; comparable, some think, to 'an antique warrior';—judging the people; forming a list of Bastille Heroes. O Friends, stain not with blood the greenest laurels ever gained in this world: such is the burden of Elie's song: could it but be listened to. Courage, Elie! Courage, ye Municipal Electors! A declining sun; the need of victuals, and of telling news, will bring assuagement, dispersion: all earthly things must end.

Along the streets of Paris circulate Seven Bastille Prisoners, borne shoulder-high; seven Heads on pikes; the Keys of the Bastille; and much else. See also the Gardes Françaises, in their steadfast military way, marching home to their barracks, with the Invalides and Swiss kindly enclosed in hollow square. It is one year and two months since these same men stood unparticipating, with Brennus d'Agoust at the Palais de Justice, when Fate overtook D'Espréménil; and now they have participated; and will participate. Not Gardes Françaises henceforth, but *Centre Grenadiers of the National Guard*: men of iron discipline and humour,—not without a kind of thought in them!

Likewise ashlar stones of the Bastille continue thundering through the dusk; its paper archives shall fly white. Old secrets come to view; and long-buried Despair finds voice. Read this portion of an old Letter:[1] 'If for my consolation Monseigneur would grant me, for the sake of God and the Most Blessed Trinity, that I could have news of my dear wife; were it only her name on a card, to show that she is alive!

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[1] *Dated* à la Bastille, 7 Octobre 1752; *signed* Quéret-Démery. *Bastille Dévoilée;* in Linguet, *Mémoires sur la Bastille* (Paris, 1821), p. 199.

It were the greatest consolation I could receive; and I should for ever bless the greatness of Monseigneur.' Poor Prisoner, who namest thyself *Quéret-Démery*, and hast no other history, —she is *dead*, that dear wife of thine, and thou art dead! 'Tis fifty years since thy breaking heart put this question; to be heard now first, and long heard, in the hearts of men.

But so does the July twilight thicken; so must Paris, as sick children, and all distracted creatures do, brawl itself finally into a kind of sleep. Municipal Electors, astonished to find their heads still uppermost, are home: only Moreau de Saint-Méry, of tropical birth and heart, of coolest judgment; he, with two others, shall sit permanent at the Townhall. Paris sleeps; gleams upward the illuminated City: patrols go clashing, without common watchword; there go rumours; alarms of war, to the extent of 'fifteen thousand men marching through the Suburb Saint-Antoine,'—who never got it marched through. Of the day's distraction judge by this of the night: Moreau de Saint-Méry, 'before rising from his seat, gave upwards of three thousand orders.'[1] What a head; comparable to Friar Bacon's Brass Head! Within it lies all Paris. Prompt must the answer be, right or wrong; in Paris is no other Authority extant. Seriously, a most cool clear head;—for which also thou, O brave Saint-Méry, in many capacities, from august Senator to Merchant's-Clerk, Book-dealer, Vice-King; in many places, from Virginia to Sardinia, shalt, ever as a brave man, find employment.[2]

Besenval has decamped, under cloud of dusk, 'amid a great affluence of people,' who did not harm him; he marches, with faint-growing tread, down the left bank of the Seine, all night, —towards infinite space. Re-summoned shall Besenval himself be; for trial, for difficult acquittal. His King's-troops, his Royal-Allemand, are gone hence for ever.

The Versailles Ball and lemonade is done; the Orangerie is silent except for nightbirds. Over in the Salle des Menus Vice-President Lafayette, with unsnuffed lights, 'with some Hundred or so of Members, stretched on tables round him,' sits erect; outwatching the Bear. This day, a second solemn Deputation went to his Majesty; a second, and then a third: with no effect. What will the end of these things be?

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[1] Dusaulx.

[2] *Biographie Universelle*, § Moreau Saint-Méry (by Fournier-Pescay)

In the Court, all is mystery, not without whisperings of terror; though ye dream of lemonade and epaulettes, ye foolish women! His Majesty, kept in happy ignorance, perhaps dreams of double-barrels and the Woods of Meudon. Late at night, the Duke de Liancourt, having official right of entrance, gains access to the Royal Apartments; unfolds, with earnest clearness, in his constitutional way, the Job's-news. '*Mais*,' said poor Louis, '*c'est une révolte*, Why, that is a revolt!'—'Sire,' answered Liancourt, 'it is not a revolt,—it is a revolution.'

CHAPTER VIII

CONQUERING YOUR KING

On the morrow a fourth Deputation to the Château is on foot: of a more solemn, not to say awful character; for, besides 'orgies in the Orangery,' it seems 'the grain-convoys are all stopped'; nor has Mirabeau's thunder been silent. Such Deputation is on the point of setting out,—when lo, his Majesty himself, attended only by his two Brothers, steps in; quite in the paternal manner; announces that the troops, and all causes of offence, are gone, and henceforth there shall be nothing but trust, reconcilement, goodwill; whereof he 'permits, and even requests,' a National Assembly to assure Paris in his name! Acclamation, as of men suddenly delivered from death, gives answer. The whole Assembly spontaneously rises to escort his Majesty back; 'interlacing their arms to keep off the excessive pressure from him'; for all Versailles is crowding and shouting. The Château Musicians, with a felicitous promptitude, strike up the *Sein de sa Famille* (Bosom of one's Family): the Queen appears at the Balcony with her little boy and girl, 'kissing them several times'; infinite *Vivats* spread far and wide,—and suddenly there has come, as it were, a new Heaven-on-Earth.

Eighty-eight august Senators, Bailly, Lafayette, and our repentant Archbishop among them, take coach for Paris, with the great intelligence; benedictions without end on their heads. From the Place Louis Quinze, where they alight, all the way to the Hôtel-de-Ville, it is one sea of Tricolor cockades, of clear National muskets; one tempest of huzzaings, hand-clappings, aided by 'occasional rollings' of drum-music. Harangues of due fervour are delivered; especially by Lally Tollendal, pious son of the ill-fated murdered Lally; on whose head, in consequence, a civic crown (of oak or parsley) is forced,—which he forcibly transfers to Bailly's.

But surely, for one thing, the National Guard should have a General! Moreau de Saint-Méry, he of the 'three thousand orders,' casts one of his significant glances on the Bust of Lafayette, which has stood there ever since the American War of Liberty. Whereupon, by acclamation, Lafayette is nominated. Again, in room of the slain traitor or quasi-traitor Flesselles, President Bailly shall be—Provost of the Merchants? No: Mayor of Paris! So be it. *Maire de Paris!* Mayor Bailly, General Lafayette; *vive Bailly, vive Lafayette!* the universal out-of-doors multitude rends the welkin in confirmation.—And now, finally, let us to Notre-Dame for a *Te Deum.*

Towards Notre-Dame Cathedral, in glad procession, these Regenerators of the Country walk, through a jubilant people; in fraternal manner; Abbé Lefevre, still black with his gunpowder services, walking arm in arm with the white-stoled Archbishop. Poor Bailly comes upon the Foundling Children, sent to kneel to him; and 'weeps.' *Te Deum*, our Archbishop officiating, is not only sung, but *shot*—with blank cartridges.

Our joy is boundless, as our wo threatened to be. Paris, by her own pike and musket, and the valour of her own heart, has conquered the very war-gods,—to the satisfaction now of Majesty itself. A courier is, this night, getting under way for Necker: the People's Minister, invited back by King, by National Assembly, and Nation, shall traverse France amid shoutings, and the sound of trumpet and timbrel.

Seeing which course of things, Messeigneurs of the Court Triumvirate, Messieurs of the dead-born Broglie Ministry, and others such, consider that their part also is clear: to mount and ride. Off, ye too-royal Broglies, Polignacs and Princes of the Blood; off while it is yet time! Did not the Palais Royal, in its late nocturnal 'violent motions,' set a specific price (place of payment not mentioned) on each of your heads?—With precautions, with the aid of pieces of cannon and regiments that can be depended on, Messeigneurs, between the 16th night and 17th morning, get to their several roads. Not without risk! Prince Condé has (or seems to have) 'men galloping at full speed'; with a view, it is thought, to fling him into the river Oise, at Pont-Sainte-Mayence.[1] The Polignacs travel disguised; friends, not servants, on their coach-box. Broglie has his own difficulties at Versailles, runs his own risks at Metz and Verdun; does nevertheless get safe to Luxemburg, and there rests.

This is what they call the First Emigration; determined on, as appears, in full Court-conclave; his Majesty assisting; prompt he, for his share of it, to follow any counsel whatsoever. 'Three Sons of France, and four Princes of the blood of Saint Louis,' says Weber, 'could not more effectually humble the Burghers of Paris than by appearing to withdraw in fear of their life.' Alas, the Burghers of Paris bear it with unexpected stoicism! The Man D'Artois indeed is gone; but has he carried, for example, the Land D'Artois with him? Not even Bagatelle the Country-house (which shall be useful as a Tavern); hardly the four-valet Breeches, leaving the Breechesmaker !—As for old Foulon, one learns that he is dead; at least 'a sumptuous funeral' is going on; the undertakers honouring him, if no other will. Intendant Berthier, his son-in-law, is still living; lurking: he joined Besenval, on that Eumenides Sunday; appearing to treat it with levity; and is now fled no man knows whither.

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[1] Weber, ii. 126.

The Emigration is not gone many miles, Prince Condé hardly across the Oise, when his Majesty, according to arrangement, for the Emigration also thought it might do good,—undertakes a rather daring enterprise: that of visiting Paris in person. With a Hundred Members of Assembly; with small or no military escort, which indeed he dismissed at the Bridge of Sèvres, poor Louis sets out; leaving a desolate Palace; a Queen weeping, the Present, the Past, and the Future all so unfriendly for her.

At the Barrier of Passy, Mayor Bailly, in grand gala, presents him with the keys; harangues him, in Academic style; mentions that it is a great day; that in Henri Quatre's case, the King had to make conquest of his People; but in this happier case, the People makes conquest of its King (*a conquis son Roi*). The King, so happily conquered, drives forward, slowly, through a steel people, all silent, or shouting only *Vive la Nation*; is harangued at the Townhall, by Moreau of the three thousand orders, by King's Procureur M. Ethys de Corny, by Lally Tollendal, and others; knows not what to think of it or say of it; learns that he is 'Restorer of French Liberty,'—as a Statue of him, to be raised on the site of the Bastille, shall testify to all men. Finally, he is shown at the Balcony, with a Tricolor cockade in his hat; is greeted now, with vehement acclamation, from Square and Street, from all windows and roofs:—and so drives home again amid glad mingled and, as it were, intermarried shouts, of *Vive le Roi* and *Vive la Nation*; wearied but safe.

It was Sunday when the red-hot balls hung over us, in mid air: it is now but Friday, and 'the Revolution is sanctioned.' An august National Assembly shall make the Constitution; and neither foreign Pandour, domestic Triumvirate, with levelled Cannon, Guy-Faux powder-plots (for that too was spoken of); nor any tyrannic Power on the Earth or under the Earth, shall say to it, What dost thou?—So jubilates the People; sure now of a Constitution. Cracked Marquis Saint-Huruge is heard under the windows of the Château; murmuring sheer speculative-treason.[1]

CHAPTER IX

THE LANTERNE

The Fall of the Bastille may be said to have shaken all France to the deepest foundations of its existence. The rumour of these wonders flies everywhere: with the natural speed of Rumour; with an effect thought to be preternatural, produced by plots. Did D'Orléans or Laclos, nay did Mirabeau (not overburdened with money at this time) send riding Couriers out from Paris; to gallop 'on all radii,' or highways, towards all points of France? It is a miracle, which no penetrating man will call in question.[2]

Already in most Towns, Electoral Committees were met; to regret Necker, in harangue and resolution. In many a Town, as Rennes, Caen, Lyons, an ebullient people was already regretting him in brickbats and musketry. But now, at every Town's-end in France, there do arrive, in these days of terror,—'men,' as men will arrive; nay 'men on horseback,' since Rumour oftenest travels riding. These men declare, with alarmed countenance, *The* Brigands to be coming, to be just at hand; and do then—ride on, about their further business, be what it might! Whereupon the whole population of such Town defensively flies to arms. Petition is soon thereafter forwarded to National Assembly; in such peril and terror of peril, leave to organise yourself cannot be withheld: the armed population becomes everywhere an enrolled National Guard. Thus rides Rumour, careering along all radii, from Paris outwards, to such purpose: in few days, some say in not many hours, all France to the utmost borders bristles with bayonets. Singular, but undeniable,—miraculous or not!—But thus may any chemical liquid, though cooled to the freezing-point, or far lower, still continue liquid; and then, on the slightest stroke or shake, it at once rushes wholly into ice. Thus has France, for long months and even years, been chemically dealt with; brought below zero; and now, shaken by the Fall of a Bastille, it instantaneously congeals: into one crystallised mass, of sharp-cutting steel! *Guai a chi la tocca,* 'Ware who touches it!

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[1] Campan, ii. 46-64.

[2] Toulongeon, i. 95; Weber; etc. etc.

In Paris, an Electoral Committee, with a new Mayor and General, is urgent with belligerent workmen to resume their handicrafts. Strong Dames of the Market (*Dames de la Halle*) deliver congratulatory harangues; present 'bouquets to the Shrine of Saint Geneviève.' Unenrolled men deposit their arms,—not so readily as could be wished: and receive 'nine francs.' With *Te Deums*, Royal Visits, and sanctioned Revolution, there is halcyon weather; weather even of preternatural brightness; the hurricane being overblown.

Nevertheless, as is natural, the waves still run high, hollow rocks retaining their murmur. We are but at the 22d of the month, hardly above a week since the Bastille fell, when it suddenly appears that old Foulon is alive; nay, that he is here, in early morning, in the streets of Paris: the extortioner, the plotter, who would make the people eat grass, and was a liar from the beginning!—It is even so. The deceptive 'sumptuous funeral' (of some domestic that died); the hiding-place at Vitry towards Fontainebleau, have not availed that wretched old man. Some living domestic or dependant, for none loves Foulon, has betrayed him to the

Village. Merciless boors of Vitry unearth him; pounce on him, like hell-hounds: Westward, old Infamy; to Paris, to be judged at the Hôtel-de-Ville! His old head, which seventy-four years have bleached, is bare; they have tied an emblematic bundle of grass on his back; a garland of nettles and thistles is round his neck: in this manner; led with ropes; goaded on with curses and menaces, must he, with his old limbs, sprawl forward; the pitiablest, most unpitied of all old men.

Sooty Saint-Antoine, and every street, musters its crowds as he passes;—the Hall of the Hôtel-de-Ville, the Place de Grève itself, will scarcely hold his escort and him. Foulon must not only be judged righteously, but judged there where he stands, without any delay. Appoint seven judges, ye Municipals, or seventy-and-seven; name them yourselves, or we will name them: but judge him![1] Electoral rhetoric, eloquence of Mayor Bailly, is wasted, for hours, explaining the beauty of the Law's delay. Delay, and still delay! Behold, O Mayor of the People, the morning has worn itself into noon: and he is still unjudged!—Lafayette, pressingly sent for, arrives; gives voice: This Foulon, a known man, is guilty almost beyond doubt; but may he not have accomplices? Ought not the truth to be cunningly pumped out of him,—in the Abbaye Prison? It is a new light! Sansculottism claps hands;—at which handclapping, Foulon (in his fainness, as his Destiny would have it) also claps. 'See! they understand one another!' cries dark Sansculottism, blazing into fury of suspicion.—'Friends,' said 'a person in good clothes,' stepping forward, 'what is the use of judging this man? Has not he been judged these thirty years?' With wild yells, Sansculottism clutches him, in its hundred hands: he is whirled across the Place de Grève, to the '*Lanterne*,' Lamp-iron which there is at the corner of the *Rue de la Vannerie*; pleading bitterly for life,—to the deaf winds. Only with the third rope—for two ropes broke, and the quavering voice still pleaded—can he be so much as got hanged! His Body is dragged through the streets; his Head goes aloft on a pike, the mouth filled with grass: amid sounds as of Tophet, from a grass-eating people.[1]

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[1] *Histoire Parlementaire*, ii. 146-9.

Surely if Revenge is a 'kind of Justice,' it is a 'wild' kind! O mad Sansculottism, hast thou risen, in thy mad darkness, in thy soot and rags; unexpectedly, like an Enceladus, living-buried, from under his Trinacria? They that would make grass be eaten do now eat grass, in *this* manner? After long dumb-groaning generations, has the turn suddenly become thine?—To such abysmal overturns, and frightful instantaneous inversions of the centre-of-gravity, are human Solecisms all liable, if they but knew it; the more liable, the falser (and topheavier) they are!—

To add to the horror of Mayor Bailly and his Municipals, word comes that Berthier has also been arrested; that he is on his way hither from Compiègne. Berthier, Intendant (say *Tax-levier*) of Paris; sycophant and tyrant; forestaller of Corn; contriver of Camps against the people;—accused of many things: is he not Foulon's son-in-law; and, in that one point, guilty of all? In these hours, too, when Sansculottism has its blood up! The shuddering Municipals send one of their number to escort him, with mounted National Guards.

At the fall of day, the wretched Berthier, still wearing a face of courage, arrives at the Barrier; in an open carriage; with the Municipal beside him; five hundred horsemen with drawn sabres; unarmed footmen enough: not without noise! Placards go brandished round him; bearing legibly his indictment, as Sansculottism, with unlegal brevity, 'in huge letters,' draws it up.[2] Paris is come forth to meet him: with hand-clappings, with windows flung up; with dances, triumph-songs, as of the Furies. Lastly, the Head of Foulon; this also meets him on a pike. Well might his 'look become glazed,' and sense fail him, at such sight!—Nevertheless, be the man's conscience what it may, his nerves are of iron. At the Hôtel-de-Ville he will answer nothing. He says he obeyed superior orders; they have his papers; they may judge and determine: as for himself, not having closed an eye these two nights, he demands, before all things, to have sleep. Leaden sleep, thou miserable Berthier! Guards rise with him, in motion towards the Abbaye. At the very door of the Hôtel-de-Ville, they are clutched; flung asunder, as by a vortex of mad arms; Berthier whirls towards the Lanterne. He snatches a musket; fells and strikes, defending himself like a mad lion: he is borne down, trampled, hanged, mangled: his Head too, and even his Heart, flies over the City on a pike.

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[1] *Deux Amis de la Liberté*, ii. 60-6.

[2] '*Il a volé le Roi et la France* (He robbed the King and France).' 'He devoured the substance of the People.' 'He was the slave of the rich, and the tyrant of the poor.' 'He drank the blood of the widow and orphan.' 'He betrayed his country.' See *Deux Amis*, ii. 67-73.

Horrible, in Lands that had known equal justice! Not so unnatural in Lands that had never known it. '*Le sang qui coule, est-il donc si pur?*' asks Barnave; intimating that the Gallows, though by irregular methods, has its own.—Thou thyself, O Reader, when thou turnest that corner of the Rue de la Vannerie, and discernest still that same grim Bracket of old Iron, wilt not want for reflections. 'Over a grocer's shop,' or otherwise; with 'a bust of Louis XIV. in the niche under it,' now no longer in the niche,—*it* still sticks there; still holding out an ineffectual light, of fish-oil; and has seen worlds wrecked, and says nothing.

But to the eye of enlightened Patriotism, what a thunder-cloud was this; suddenly shaping itself in the radiance of the halcyon weather! Cloud of Erebus blackness; betokening latent electricity without limit. Mayor Bailly, General Lafayette throw up their commissions, in an indignant manner;—need to be flattered back again. The cloud disappears, as thunder-clouds do. The halcyon weather returns, though of a greyer complexion; of a character more and more evidently *not* supernatural.

Thus, in any case, with what rubs soever, shall the Bastille be abolished from our Earth; and with it, Feudalism, Despotism; and, one hopes, Scoundrelism generally, and all hard usage of man by his brother man. Alas, the Scoundrelism and hard usage are not so easy of abolition! But as for the Bastille, it sinks day after day, and month after month; its ashlars and boulders tumbling down continually, by express order of our Municipals. Crowds of the curious roam through its caverns; gaze on the skeletons found walled-up, on the *oubliettes*, iron-cages, monstrous stone-blocks with padlock chains. One day we discern Mirabeau there, along with the Genevese Dumont.[1] Workers and onlookers make reverent way for him; fling verses, flowers on his path, Bastille-papers and curiosities into his carriage, with *vivats*.

Able Editors compile Books from the *Bastille Archives*; from what of them remain unburnt. The Key of that Robber-Den shall cross the Atlantic; shall lie on Washington's hall-table. The great Clock ticks now in a private patriotic Clockmaker's apartment; no longer measuring hours of mere heaviness. Vanished is the Bastille, what we call vanished: the *body*, or sandstones, of it hanging, in benign metamorphosis, for centuries to come, over the Seine waters, as *Pont Louis Seize*;[2] the soul of it living, perhaps still longer, in the memories of men.

So far, ye august Senators, with your Tennis-Court Oaths, your inertia and impetus, your sagacity and pertinacity, have ye brought us. 'And yet think, Messieurs,' as the Petitioners justly urged, 'you who were our saviours did yourselves need saviours,'—the brave Bastillers, namely; workmen of Paris; many of them in straitened pecuniary circumstances.[3] Subscriptions are opened; Lists are formed, more accurate than

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[1] Dumont, *Souvenirs sur Mirabeau*, p. 305.

[2] Dulaure, *Histoire de Paris*, viii. 434.

[3] Moniteur, *Séance du Samedi* 18 *Juillet* 1789 (in *Histoire Parlementaire*, ii. 137).

Elie's; harangues are delivered. A Body of *Bastille Heroes*, tolerably complete, did get together;—comparable to the Argonauts; hoping to endure like them. But in little more than a year the whirlpool of things threw them asunder again, and they sank. So many highest superlatives achieved by man are followed by new higher; and dwindle into comparatives and positives! The Siege of the Bastille, weighed with which, in the Historical balance, most other sieges, including that of Troy Town, are gossamer, cost, as we find, in killed and mortally wounded, on the part of the Besiegers, some Eighty-three persons: on the part of the Besieged, after all that straw-burning, fire-pumping, and deluge of musketry, One poor solitary Invalid, shot stone-dead (*roide-mort*) on the battlements![1] The Bastille Fortress, like the City of Jericho, was overturned by miraculous *sound*.

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[1] Dusaulx, *Prise de la Bastille*, p. 447, etc.

BOOK SIXTH

CONSOLIDATION

CHAPTER I

MAKE THE CONSTITUTION

HERE perhaps is the place to fix, a little more precisely, what these two words, *French Revolution*, shall mean; for, strictly considered, they may have as many meanings as there are speakers of them. All things are in revolution; in change from moment to moment, which becomes sensible from epoch to epoch: in this Time-World of ours there is properly nothing else but revolution and mutation, and even nothing else conceivable. Revolution, you answer, means *speedier* change. Whereupon one has still to ask: How speedy? At what degree of speed; in what particular points of this variable course, which varies in velocity, but can never stop till Time itself stops, does revolution begin and end; cease to be ordinary mutation, and again become such? It is a thing that will depend on definition more or less arbitrary.

For ourselves, we answer that French Revolution means here the open violent Rebellion, and Victory, of disimprisoned Anarchy against corrupt worn-out Authority: how Anarchy breaks prison; bursts-up from the infinite Deep, and rages uncontrollable, immeasurable, enveloping a world; in phasis after phasis of fever-frenzy;—till the frenzy burning itself out, and what elements of new Order it held (since all Force holds such) developing themselves, the Uncontrollable be got, if not reimprisoned, yet harnessed, and its mad forces made to work towards their object as sane regulated ones. For as Hierarchies and Dynasties of all kinds, Theocracies, Aristocracies, Autocracies, Strumpetocracies, have ruled over the world; so it was appointed, in the decrees of Providence, that this same Victorious Anarchy, Jacobinism, Sansculottism, French Revolution, Horrors of French Revolution, or what else mortals name it, should have its turn. The 'destructive wrath' of Sansculottism: this is what we speak, having unhappily no voice for singing.

Surely a great Phenomenon: nay it is a *transcendental* one, overstepping all rules and experience; the crowning Phenomenon of our Modern Time. For here again, most unexpectedly, comes antique Fanaticism in new and newest vesture; miraculous, as all Fanaticism is. Call it the Fanaticism of 'making away with formulas, *de humer les formules*.' The world of formulas, the *formed* regulated world, which all habitable world is,—must needs hate such Fanaticism like death; and be at deadly variance with it. The world of formulas must conquer it; or failing that, must die execrating it, anathematising it;—can nevertheless in nowise prevent its being and its having been. The Anathemas are there, and the miraculous Thing is there.

Whence it cometh? Whither it goeth? These are questions! When the age of Miracles lay faded into the distance as an incredible tradition, and even the age of Conventionalities was now old; and Man's Existence had for long generations rested on mere formulas which were grown hollow by course of time; and it seemed as if no Reality any longer existed, but only Phantasms of realities, and God's Universe were the work of the Tailor and Upholsterer mainly, and men were buckram masks that went about becking and grimacing there,—on a sudden, the Earth yawns asunder, and amid Tartarean smoke, and glare of fierce brightness, rises SANSCULOTTISM, many-headed, fire-breathing, and asks: What think ye of *me*? Well may the buckram masks start together, terror-struck; 'into expressive well-concerted groups!' It is indeed, Friends, a most singular, most fatal thing. Let whosoever is but buckram and a phantasm look to it: ill verily may it fare with him; here methinks he cannot much longer be. Wo also to many a one who is not wholly buckram, but partly real and human! The age of Miracles has come back! 'Behold the World-Phœnix, in fire-consummation and fire-creation: wide are her fanning wings; loud is her death-melody, of battle-thunders and falling towns; skyward lashes the funeral flame, enveloping all things: it is the Death-Birth of a World!'

Whereby, however, as we often say, shall one unspeakable blessing seem attainable. This, namely: that Man and his Life rest no more on hollowness and a Lie, but on solidity and some kind of Truth. Welcome the beggarliest truth, so it *be* one, in exchange for the royalest sham! Truth of any kind breeds ever new and better truth; thus hard granite rock will crumble down into soil, under the blessed skyey influences; and cover itself with verdure, with fruitage and umbrage; But as for Falsehood, which, in like contrary manner, grows ever falser,—what can it, or what should it do but decease, being ripe; decompose itself, gently or even violently, and return to the Father of it,—too probably in flames of fire?

Sansculottism will burn much; but what is incombustible it will not burn. Fear not Sansculottism; recognise it for what it is, the portentous inevitable end of much, the miraculous beginning of much. One other thing thou mayest understand of it: that it too came from God; for has it not *been?* From of old, as it is written, are His goings forth; in the great Deep of things; fearful and wonderful now as in the beginning: in the whirlwind also He speaks; and the wrath of men is made to praise Him.—But to gauge and measure this immeasurable Thing, and what is called *account for it*, and reduce it to a dead logic-formula, attempt not! Much less shalt thou shriek thyself hoarse, cursing it; for that, to all needful lengths, has been already done. As an actually existing Son of Time, *look*, with unspeakable manifold interest, oftenest in silence, at what the Time did bring: therewith edify, instruct, nourish thyself, or were it but amuse and gratify thyself, as it is given thee.

Another question which at every new turn will rise on us, requiring ever new reply, is this: Where the French Revolution specially *is?* In the King's Palace, in his Majesty's or her Majesty's managements, and maltreatments, cabals, imbecilities and woes, answer some few:—whom we do not answer. In the National Assembly, answer a large mixed multitude: who accordingly seat themselves in the Reporter's Chair; and therefrom noting what Proclamations, Acts, Reports, passages of logic-fence, bursts of parliamentary eloquence seem notable within doors, and what tumults and rumours of tumult become audible from without, produce volume on volume; and, naming it History of the French Revolution, contentedly publish the same. To do the like, to almost any extent, with so many Filed Newspapers, *Choix des Rapports*, *Histoires Parlementaires* as there are, amounting to many horseloads, were easy for us. Easy but unprofitable. The National Assembly, named now Constituent Assembly, goes its course; making the Constitution; but the French Revolution also goes *its* course.

In general, may we not say that the French Revolution lies in the heart and head of every violent-speaking, of every violent-thinking French Man? How the Twenty-five Millions of such, in their perplexed combination, acting and counteracting, may give birth to events; which event successively is the cardinal one; and from what point of vision it may best be surveyed: this is a problem. Which problem the best insight, seeking light from all possible sources, shifting its point of vision whithersoever vision or glimpse of vision can be had, may employ itself in solving; and be well content to solve in some tolerably approximate way.

As to the National Assembly, in so far as it still towers eminent over France, after the manner of a car-borne *Carroccio*, though now no longer in the van; and rings signals for retreat or for advance,—it is and continues a reality among other realities. But in so far as it sits making the Constitution, on the other hand, it is a fatuity and chimera mainly. Alas, in the never so heroic building of Montesquieu-Mably card-castles, though shouted over by the world, what interest is there? Occupied in that way, an august National Assembly becomes for us little other than a Sanhedrim of Pedants, not of the gerund-grinding, yet of no fruitfuller sort; and its loud debatings and recriminations about Rights of Man, Right of Peace and War, *Veto suspensif, Veto absolu*, what are they but so many Pedant's-curses, 'May God confound you for your *Theory of Irregular Verbs*!'

A Constitution can be built, Constitutions enough *à la Sieyes*: but the frightful difficulty is, that of getting men to come and live in them! Could Sieyes have drawn thunder and lightning out of Heaven to sanction his Constitution, it had been well: but without any thunder? Nay, strictly considered, is it not still true that without some such celestial sanction, given visibly in thunder or invisibly otherwise, no Constitution can in the longrun be worth much more than the waste-paper it is written on? The Constitution, the set of Laws, or prescribed Habits of Acting, that men will live under, is the one which images their Convictions,—their Faith as to this wondrous Universe, and what rights, duties, capabilities they have there: which stands sanctioned, therefore, by Necessity itself; if not by a seen Deity, then by an unseen one. Other Laws, whereof there are always enough *ready*-made, are usurpations; which men do not obey, but rebel against, and abolish at their earliest convenience.

The question of questions accordingly were, Who is it that, especially for rebellers and abolishers, can make a Constitution? He that can image-forth the general Belief when there is one; that can impart one when, as here, there is none. A most rare man; ever, as of old, a god-missioned man! Here, however, in defect of such transcendent supreme man, Time with its infinite succession of merely superior men, each yielding his little contribution, does much. Force likewise (for, as Antiquarian Philosophers teach, the royal Sceptre was from the first something of a Hammer, to *crack* such heads as could not be convinced) will all along find somewhat to do. And thus in perpetual abolition and reparation, rending and mending, with struggle and strife, with present evil, and the hope and effort towards future good, must the Constitution, as all human things do, build itself forward; or unbuild itself, and sink, as it can and may. O Sieyes, and ye other Committee-men, and Twelve Hundred miscellaneous individuals from all parts of France! what is the Belief of France, and yours, if ye knew it? Properly that there shall be no Belief; that all formulas be swallowed. The Constitution which will suit that? Alas, too clearly, a No-Constitution, an Anarchy;—which also, in due season, shall be vouchsafed you.

But, after all, what can an unfortunate National Assembly do? Consider only this, that there are Twelve Hundred miscellaneous individuals; not a unit of whom but has his own thinking-apparatus, his own speaking-apparatus! In every unit of them is some belief and wish, different for each, both that France should be regenerated, and also that he individually should do it. Twelve Hundred separate Forces, yoked miscellaneously to any object, miscellaneously to all sides of it; and bidden pull for life!

Or is it the nature of National Assemblies generally to do, with endless labour and clangour, Nothing? Are Representative Governments mostly at bottom Tyrannies too? Shall we say, the *Tyrants*, the ambitious contentious Persons, from all corners of the country do, in this manner, get gathered into one place; and there, with motion and counter-motion, with jargon and hubbub, *cancel* one another, like the fabulous Kilkenny Cats; and produce, for net-result, *zero*;—the country meanwhile *governing* or guiding *itself*, by such wisdom, recognised, or for most part unrecognised, as may exist in individual heads here and there?—Nay, even that were a great improvement: for of old, with their Guelf Factions and Ghibelline Factions, with their Red Roses and White Roses, they were wont to cancel the whole country as well. Besides they do it now in a much narrower cockpit; within the four walls of their Assembly House, and here and there an outpost of Hustings and Barrel-heads; do it with tongues too, not with swords:—all which improvements, in the art of producing zero, are they not great? Nay, best of all, some happy Continents (as the Western one, with its Savannahs, where whosoever has four willing limbs finds food under his feet, and an infinite sky over his head) can do without governing.—What Sphinx-questions; which the distracted world, in these very generations, must answer or die!

CHAPTER II

THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

ONE thing an elected Assembly of Twelve Hundred is fit for: Destroying. Which indeed is but a more decided exercise of its natural talent for Doing Nothing. Do nothing, only keep agitating, debating; and things will destroy themselves.

So and not otherwise proved it with an august National Assembly. It took the name Constituent, as if its mission and function had been to construct or build; which also, with its whole soul, it endeavoured to do: yet, in the fates, in the nature of things, there lay for it precisely of all functions the most opposite to that. Singular, what Gospels men will believe; even Gospels according to Jean Jacques! It was the fixed Faith of these National Deputies, as of all thinking Frenchmen, that the Constitution could be *made*; that they, there and then, were called to make it. How, with the toughness of old Hebrews or Ishmaelite Moslem, did the otherwise light unbelieving People persist in this their *Credo quia impossibile*; and front the armed world with it, and grow fanatic and even heroic, and do exploits by it! The Constituent Assembly's Constitution, and several others, will, being printed and not manuscript, survive to future generations, as an instructive well-nigh incredible document of the Time: the most significant Picture of the then existing France; or at lowest, Picture of these men's Picture of it.

But in truth and seriousness, what could the National Assembly have done? The thing to *be* done was, actually as they said, to regenerate France; to abolish the old France, and make a new one, quietly or forcibly, by concession or by violence: this by the Law of Nature has become inevitable. With what degree of violence, depends on the wisdom of those that preside over it. With perfect wisdom on the part of the National Assembly, it had all been otherwise; but whether, in any wise, it could have been pacific, nay other than bloody and convulsive, may still be a question.

Grant, meanwhile, that this Constituent Assembly does to the last continue to be something. With a sigh, it sees itself incessantly forced away from its infinite divine task of perfecting 'the Theory of Irregular Verbs,'—to finite terrestrial tasks, which latter have still a significance for us. It is the cynosure of revolutionary France, this National Assembly. All work of Government has fallen into its hands, or under its control; all men look to it for guidance. In the middle of that huge Revolt of Twenty-five millions, it hovers always aloft as *Carroccio* or Battle-Standard, impelling and impelled, in the most confused way: if it cannot give much guidance, it will still seem to give some. It emits pacificatory Proclamations not a few; with more or with less result. It authorises the enrolment of National Guards,—lest Brigands come to devour us, and reap the unripe crops. It sends missions to quell 'effervescences'; to deliver men from the

Lanterne. It can listen to congratulatory Addresses, which arrive daily by the sackful; mostly in King Cambyses' vein: also to Petitions and complaints from all mortals; so that every mortal's complaint, if it cannot get redressed, may at least hear itself complain. For the rest, an august National Assembly can produce Parliamentary Eloquence; and appoint Committees. Committees of the Constitution, of Reports, of Researches; and of much else: which again yield mountains of Printed Paper; the theme of new Parliamentary Eloquence, in bursts or in plenteous smooth-flowing floods. And so, from the waste vortex whereon all things go whirling and grinding, Organic Laws, or the similitude of such, slowly emerge.

With endless debating, we get the *Rights of Man* written down and promulgated: true paper basis of all paper Constitutions. Neglecting, cry the opponents, to declare the Duties of Man! Forgetting, answer we, to ascertain the *Mights* of Man;—one of the fatalest omissions!—Nay sometimes, as on the Fourth of August, our National Assembly, fired suddenly by an almost preternatural enthusiasm, will get through whole masses of work in one night. A memorable night, this Fourth of August: Dignitaries temporal and spiritual; Peers, Archbishops, Parlement-Presidents, each outdoing the other in patriotic devotedness, come successively to throw their now untenable possessions on the 'altar of the fatherland.' With louder and louder vivats,—for indeed it is 'after dinner' too,—they abolish Tithes, Seignorial Dues, Gabelle, excessive Preservation of Game; nay Privilege, Immunity, Feudalism root and branch; then appoint a *Te Deum* for it; and so, finally, disperse about three in the morning, striking the stars with their sublime heads. Such night, unforeseen but for ever memorable, was this of the Fourth of August 1789. Miraculous, or semi-miraculous, some seem to think it. A new Night of Pentecost, shall we say, shaped according to the new Time, and new Church of Jean Jacques Rousseau? It had its causes; also its effects.

In such manner labour the National Deputies; perfecting their Theory of Irregular Verbs; governing France, and being governed by it; with toil and noise;—cutting asunder ancient intolerable bonds; and, for new ones, assiduously spinning ropes of sand. Were their labours a nothing or a something, yet the eyes of all France being reverently fixed on them, History can never very long leave them altogether out of sight.

For the present, if we glance into that Assembly-Hall of theirs, it will be found, as is natural, 'most irregular.' As many as 'a hundred members are on their feet at once'; no rule in making motions, or only commencements of a rule; Spectators' Gallery allowed to applaud, and even to hiss;[1] President, appointed once a fortnight, raising many times no serene head above the waves. Nevertheless, as in all human Assemblages, like does begin arranging itself to like; the perennial rule, *Ubi homines sunt modi sunt*, proves valid. Rudiments of Methods disclose themselves; rudiments of Parties. There is a Right Side (*Côté Droit*), a Left Side (*Côté Gauche*); sitting on M. le President's right hand, or on his left: the *Côté Droit* conservative; the *Côté Gauche* destructive. Intermediate is Anglo-maniac Constitutionalism, or Two-Chamber Royalism; with its Mouniers, its Lallys,—fast verging towards nonentity. Pre-eminent, on the Right Side, pleads and perorates Cazalès the Dragoon-captain, eloquent, mildly fervent; earning for himself the shadow of a name. There also blusters Barrel-Mirabeau, the Younger Mirabeau, not without wit: dusky D'Esprémênil does nothing but sniff and ejaculate; *might*, it is fondly thought, lay prostrate the Elder Mirabeau himself, would he but try,[2]—which he does not. Last and greatest, see, for one moment the Abbé Maury; with his jesuitic eyes, his impassive brass face, 'image of all the cardinal sins.' Indomitable, unquenchable, he fights jesuitico-rhetorically; with toughest lungs and heart; for Throne, especially for Altar and Tithes. So that a shrill voice exclaims once, from the Gallery: 'Messieurs of the Clergy, you *have* to be shaved; if you wriggle too much, you will get cut.'[1]

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[1] Arthur Young, i. 111.

[2] *Biographie Universelle*, § D'Esprémênil (by Beaulieu).

The Left side is also called the D'Orléans side; and sometimes, derisively, the Palais Royal. And yet, so confused, real-imaginary seems everything, 'it is doubtful,' as Mirabeau said, 'whether D'Orléans himself belong to that same D'Orléans party.' What can be known and seen is, that his moon-visage does beam forth from that point of space. There likewise sits seagreen Robespierre; throwing in his light weight, with decision, not yet with effect. A thin lean Puritan and Precisian, he would make away with formulas; yet lives, moves, and has his being wholly in formulas, of another sort. '*Peuple*,' such, according to Robespierre, ought to be the Royal method of promulgating Laws, '*Peuple*, this is the Law I have framed for thee; dost thou accept it?'—answered, from Right side, from Centre and Left, by inextinguishable laughter.[2] Yet men of insight discern that the Seagreen may by chance go far: 'This man,' observes Mirabeau, 'will do somewhat; he believes every word he says.'

Abbé Sieyes is busy with mere Constitutional work; wherein, unluckily, fellow-workmen are less pliable than, with one who has completed the Science of Polity, they ought to be. Courage, Sieyes, nevertheless! Some twenty months of heroic travail, of contradiction from the stupid, and the Constitution shall be built; the top-stone of it brought out with shouting,—say rather, the top-paper, for it is all Paper; and *thou* hast done in it what the Earth or the Heaven could require, thy utmost. Note likewise this Trio; memorable for several things; memorable were it only that their history is written in an epigram: 'Whatsoever these Three have in hand,' it is said, 'Duport thinks it, Barnave speaks it, Lameth does it.'[3]

But royal Mirabeau? Conspicuous among all parties, raised above and beyond them all, this man rises more and more. As we often say, he has an *eye*, he is a reality; while others are formulas and eye-*glasses*. In the Transient he will detect the Perennial; find some firm footing even among Paper-vortexes. His fame is gone forth to all lands; it gladdened the heart of the crabbed old Friend of Men himself before he died. The very Postillions of inns have heard of Mirabeau: when an impatient Traveller complains that the team is insufficient, his Postillion answers, 'Yes, Monsieur, the wheelers are weak; but my *mirabeau* (main horse), you see, is a right one, *mais mon mirabeau est excellent*.'[1]

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[1] *Dictionnaire des Hommes Marquans*, ii. 519.

[2] *Moniteur*, No. 67 (in *Hist. Parl.*).

[3] See Toulongeon, i. c. 3.

And now, Reader, thou shalt quit this noisy Discrepancy of a National Assembly; not (if thou be of humane mind) without pity. Twelve hundred brother men are there, in the centre of Twenty-five Millions; fighting so fiercely with Fate and with one another; struggling their lives out, as most sons of Adam do, for that which profiteth not. Nay, on the whole, it is admitted further to be very *dull*. 'Dull as this day's Assembly,' said some one. 'Why date, *Pourquoi dater?*' answered Mirabeau.

Consider that they are Twelve Hundred; that they not only speak, but *read* their speeches; and even borrow and steal speeches to read! With Twelve Hundred fluent speakers, and their Noah's Deluge of vociferous commonplace, silence unattainable may well seem the one blessing of Life. But figure Twelve Hundred pamphleteers; droning forth perpetual pamphlets: and no man to gag them! Neither, as in the American Congress, do the arrangements seem perfect. A Senator has not his own Desk and Newspaper here; of Tobacco (much less of Pipes) there is not the slightest provision. Conversation itself has to be transacted in a low tone, with continual interruption: only 'Pencil-notes' circulate freely, 'in incredible numbers, to the foot of the very tribune.'[2] Such work is it, regenerating a Nation; perfecting one's Theory of Irregular Verbs!

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[1] Dumont, *Souvenirs sur Mirabeau*, p. 255.

[2] See Dumont (pp. 159-67); Arthur Young, etc.

CHAPTER III

THE GENERAL OVERTURN

OF the King's Court for the present, there is almost nothing whatever to be said. Silent, deserted are these halls; Royalty languishes forsaken of its war-god and all its hopes, till once the Œil-de-Bœuf rally again. The sceptre is departed from King Louis; is gone over to the *Salle des Menus,* to the Paris Townhall, or one knows not whither. In the July days, while all ears were yet deafened by the crash of the Bastille, and Ministers and Princes were scattered to the four winds, it seemed as if the very Valets had grown heavy of hearing. Besenval, also in flight towards Infinite Space, but hovering a little at Versailles, was addressing his Majesty personally for an Order about post-horses; when, lo, 'the Valet-in-waiting places himself familiarly between his Majesty and me,' stretching out his rascal neck to learn what it was! His Majesty, in sudden choler, whirled round; made a clutch at the tongs: 'I gently prevented him; he grasped my hand in thankfulness; and I noticed tears in his eyes.'[1]

Poor King; for French Kings also are men! Louis Fourteenth himself once clutched the tongs, and even smote with them; but then it was at Louvois, and Dame Maintenon ran up.—The Queen sits weeping in her inner apartments, surrounded by weak women: she is 'at the height of unpopularity'; universally regarded as the evil genius of France. Her friends and familiar counsellors have all fled; and fled, surely, on the foolishest errand. The Château Polignac still frowns aloft, on its 'bold and enormous cubical rock,' amid the blooming champaigns, amid the blue girdling mountains of Auvergne:[2] but no Duke and Duchess Polignac look forth from it; they have fled, they have 'met Necker at Bâle'; they shall not return. That France should see her Nobles resist the Irresistible, Inevitable, with the face of angry men, was unhappy, not unexpected; but with the face and sense of pettish children? This was her peculiarity. They understood nothing; would understand nothing. Does not, at this hour, a new Polignac, first-born of these Two, sit reflective in the Castle of Ham;[1] in an astonishment he will never recover from; the most confused of existing mortals?

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[1] Besenval, iii. 419.

[2] Arthur Young, i. 165.

King Louis has his new Ministry: mere Popularities; Old-President Pompignan; Necker, coming back in triumph; and other such.[2] But what will it avail him? As was said, the sceptre, all but the wooden gilt sceptre, has departed elsewhither. Volition, determination is not in this man: only innocence, indolence; dependence on all persons but himself, on all circumstances but the circumstances he were lord of. So troublous internally is our Versailles and its work. Beautiful, if seen from afar, resplendent like a Sun; seen near at hand, a mere Sun's-Atmosphere, hiding darkness, confused ferment of ruin!

But over France, there goes on the indisputablest 'destruction of formulas'; transaction of realities that follow therefrom. So many millions of persons, all gyved, and nigh strangled, with formulas; whose Life nevertheless, at least the digestion and hunger of it, was real enough! Heaven has at length sent an abundant harvest: but what profits it the poor man, when Earth with her formulas interposes? Industry, in these times of insurrection, must needs lie dormant; capital, as usual, not circulating, but stagnating timorously in nooks. The poor man is short of work, is therefore short of money; nay even had he money, bread is not to be bought for it. Were it plotting of Aristocrats, plotting of D'Orléans; were it Brigands, preternatural terror, and the clang of Phœbus Apollo's silver bow,—enough, the markets are scarce of grain, plentiful only in tumult. Farmers seem lazy to thresh;—

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[1] A.D. 1835.

[2] Montgaillard, ii. 108.

being either 'bribed'; or needing no bribe, with prices ever rising, with perhaps rent itself no longer so pressing. Neither, what is singular, do municipal enactments, 'That along with so many measures of wheat you shall sell so many of rye,' and other the like, much mend the matter. Dragoons with drawn swords stand ranked among the corn-sacks, often more dragoons than sacks.[1] Meal-mobs abound; growing into mobs of a still darker quality.

Starvation has been known among the French Commonalty before this; known and familiar. Did not we see them, in the year 1775, presenting, in sallow faces, in wretchedness and raggedness, their Petition of Grievances; and, for answer, getting a brand-new Gallows forty feet high? Hunger and Darkness, through long years! For look back on that earlier Paris Riot, when a Great Personage, worn out by debauchery, was believed to be in want of Blood-baths; and Mothers, in worn raiment, yet with living hearts under it, 'filled the public places' with their wild Rachel-cries,—stilled also by the Gallows. Twenty years ago, the Friend of Men (preaching to the deaf) described the Limousin Peasants as wearing a 'pain-stricken (*souffre-douleur*) look,' a look *past* complaint; 'as if the oppression of the great were like the hail and the thunder, a thing irremediable, the ordinance of Nature.'[2] And now if, in some great hour, the shock of a falling Bastille should awaken you; and it were found to be the ordinance of Art merely; and remediable, reversible!

Or has the Reader forgotten that 'flood of savages,' which, in sight of the same Friend of Men, descended from the mountains at Mont d'Or? Lank-haired haggard faces; shapes rawboned, in high sabots, in woollen jupes, with leather girdles studded with copper nails! They rocked from foot to foot, and beat time with their elbows too, as the quarrel and battle, which was not long in beginning, went on; shouting fiercely; the lank faces distorted into the similitude of a cruel laugh.

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[1] Arthur Young, i. 129, etc.

[2] Fils Adoptif, *Mémoires de Mirabeau*, i. 364-394.

For they were darkened and hardened: long had they been the prey of excise-men and tax-men; of 'clerks with the cold spurt of their pen.' It was the fixed prophecy of our old Marquis, which no man would listen to, that 'such Government by Blind-man's-buff, stumbling along too far, would end by the General Overturn, the *Culbute Générale*'!

No man would listen; each went his thoughtless way;—and Time and Destiny also travelled on. The Government by Blind-man's-buff, stumbling along, has reached the precipice inevitable for it. Dull Drudgery, driven on, by clerks with the cold dastard spurt of their pen, has been driven—into a Communion of Drudges! For now, moreover, there have come the strangest confused tidings; by Paris Journals with their paper wings; or still more portentous, where no Journals are,[1] by rumour and conjecture: Oppression *not* inevitable; a Bastille prostrate, and the Constitution fast getting ready! Which Constitution, if it be something and not nothing, what can it be but bread to eat?

The Traveller, 'walking uphill, bridle in hand,' overtakes 'a poor woman'; the image, as such commonly are, of drudgery and scarcity; 'looking sixty years of age, though she is not yet twenty-eight.' They have seven children, her poor drudge and she: a farm, with one cow, which helps to make the children soup; also one little horse, or garron. They have rents and quit-rents, Hens to pay to this Seigneur, Oat-sacks to that; King's taxes, Statute-labour, Church-taxes, taxes enough;—and think the times inexpressible. She has heard that some*where*, in some manner, some*thing* is to be done for the poor: 'God send it soon; for the dues and taxes crush us down (*nous écrasent*)!'[2]

Fair prophecies are spoken, but they are not fulfilled. There have been Notables, Assemblages, turnings-out and comings-in. Intriguing and manœuvring; Parlementary eloquence and arguing, Greek meeting Greek in high places, has long gone on; yet still bread comes not. The harvest is reaped and garnered; yet still we have no bread. Urged by despair and by hope, what can Drudgery do, but rise, as predicted, and produce the General Overturn?

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[1] See Arthur Young, i. 137, 150, etc.

[2] *Ibid.* i. 134.

Fancy, then, some Five full-grown Millions of such gaunt figures, with their haggard faces (*figures hâves*); in woollen jupes, with copper-studded leather girths, and high sabots, starting up to ask, as in forest-roarings, their washed Upper-Classes, after long unreviewed centuries, virtually this question: How have ye treated us; how have ye taught us, fed us and led us, while we toiled for you? The answer can be read in flames, over the nightly summer-sky. *This* is the feeding and leading we have had of you: EMPTINESS,—of pocket, of stomach, of head and of heart. Behold there is *nothing in us*; nothing but what Nature gives her wild children of the desert: Ferocity and Appetite; Strength grounded on Hunger. Did ye mark among your Rights of Man, that man was not to die of starvation, while there was bread reaped by him? It is among the Mights of Man.

Seventy-two Châteaus have flamed aloft in the Mâconnais and Beaujolais alone: this seems the centre of the conflagration; but it has spread over Dauphiné, Alsace, the Lyonnais; the whole South-East is in a blaze. All over the North, from Rouen to Metz, disorder is abroad: smugglers of salt go openly in armed bands: the barriers of towns are burnt; toll-gatherers, tax-gatherers, official persons put to flight. 'It was thought,' says Young, 'the people, from hunger, would revolt;' and we see they have done it. Desperate Lackalls, long prowling aimless, now finding hope in desperation itself, everywhere form a nucleus. They ring the Church-bell by way of tocsin: and the Parish turns out to the work.[1] Ferocity, atrocity; hunger and revenge: such work as we can imagine!

Ill stands it now with the Seigneur, who, for example, 'has walled-up the only Fountain of the Township'; who has ridden high on his *chartier* and parchments; who has preserved

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[1] See *Hist. Parl.* ii. 243-6.

Game not wisely but too well. Churches also, and Canonries, are sacked, without mercy; which have shorn the flock too close, forgetting to feed it. Wo to the land over which Sansculottism, in its day of vengeance, tramps roughshod,—shod in sabots! Highbred Seigneurs, with their delicate women and little ones, had to 'fly half-naked,' under cloud of night: glad to escape the flames, and even worse. You meet them at the *tables-d'hôte* of inns; making wise reflections or foolish, that 'rank is destroyed'; uncertain whither they shall now wend.[1] The *métayer* will find it convenient to be slack in paying rent. As for the Tax-gatherer, he, long hunting as a biped of prey, may now find himself hunted as one; his Majesty's Exchequer will not 'fill up the Deficit' this season: it is the notion of many, that a Patriot Majesty, being the restorer of French Liberty, has abolished most taxes, though, for their private ends, some men make a secret of it.

Where this will end? In the Abyss, one may prophesy; whither all Delusions are, at all moments, travelling; where this Delusion has now arrived. For if there be a Faith, from of old, it is this, as we often repeat, that no Lie can live for ever. The very Truth has to change its vesture, from time to time; and be born again. But all Lies have sentence of death written down against them, in Heaven's Chancery itself; and, slowly or fast, advance incessantly towards their hour. 'The sign of a Grand Seigneur being landlord,' says the vehement plain-spoken Arthur Young, 'are wastes, *landes*, deserts, ling: go to his residence, you will find it in the middle of a forest, peopled with deer, wild boars and wolves. The fields are scenes of pitiable management, as the houses are of misery. To see so many millions of hands, that would be industrious, all idle and starving: O, if I were a legislator of France for one day, I would make these great lords skip again!'[2] O Arthur, thou now actually beholdest them *skip*; —wilt thou grow to grumble at that too?

For long years and generations it lasted; but the time came. Featherbrain, whom no reasoning and no pleading could touch, the glare of the firebrand had to illuminate: there remained but that method. Consider it, look at it! The widow is gathering nettles for her children's dinner; a perfumed Seigneur, delicately lounging in the Œil-de-Bœuf, has an alchemy whereby he will extract from her the third nettle, and name it Rent and Law: such an arrangement must end. Ought it not? But, O most fearful is *such* an ending! Let those, to whom God, in his great mercy, has granted time and space, prepare another and milder one.

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[1] See Young, i. 149, etc.

[2] *Ibid.* i. 12, 48, 84, etc.

To some it is a matter of wonder that the Seigneurs did not do something to help themselves; say, combine and arm: for there were a 'hundred and fifty thousand of them,' all valiant enough. Unhappily, a hundred and fifty thousand, scattered over wide Provinces, divided by mutual ill-will, cannot combine. The highest Seigneurs, as we have seen, had already emigrated,—with a view of putting France to the blush. Neither are arms now the peculiar property of Seigneurs; but of every mortal who has ten shillings wherewith to buy a secondhand firelock.

Besides, those starving Peasants, after all, have not four feet and claws, that you could keep them down permanently in that manner. They are not even of black colour: they are mere Unwashed Seigneurs; and a Seigneur too has human bowels!—The Seigneurs did what they could; enrolled in National Guards; fled, with shrieks, complaining to Heaven and Earth. One Seigneur, famed Memmay of Quincey, near Vesoul, invited all the rustics of his neighbourhood to a banquet; blew-up his Château and them with gunpowder; and instantaneously vanished, no man yet knows whither.[1]—Some half-dozen years after, he came back; and demonstrated that it was by accident.

Nor are the Authorities idle; though unluckily, all Authorities, Municipalities and suchlike, are in the uncertain transi-

[1] *Hist. Parl.* ii. 161.

tionary state; getting regenerated from old Monarchic to new Democratic; no Official yet knows clearly what he is. Nevertheless, Mayors old or new do gather *Marechaussées*, National Guards, Troops of the line; justice, of the most summary sort, is not wanting. The Electoral Committee of Mâcon, though but a Committee, goes the length of hanging, for its own behoof, as many as twenty. The Prévôt of Dauphiné traverses the country 'with a movable column,' with tipstaves, gallows-ropes; for gallows any tree will serve, and suspend its culprit, or 'thirteen' culprits.

Unhappy country! How is the fair gold-and-green of the ripe bright Year defaced with horrid blackness; black ashes of Châteaus, black bodies of gibbeted Men! Industry has ceased in it; not sounds of the hammer and saw, but of the tocsin and alarm-drum. The sceptre has departed, *whither* one knows not;—breaking itself in pieces: here impotent, there tyrannous. National Guards are unskilful and of doubtful purpose; Soldiers are inclined to mutiny: there is danger that they two may quarrel, danger that they may *agree*. Strasburg has seen riots: a Townhall torn to shreds, its archives scattered white on the winds; drunk soldiers embracing drunk citizens for three days, and Mayor Dietrich and Marshal Rochambeau reduced nigh to desperation.[1]

Through the middle of all which phenomena is seen, on his triumphant transit, 'escorted,' through Béfort, for instance, 'by fifty National Horsemen and all the military music of the place,'—M. Necker returning from Bâle! Glorious as the meridian; though poor Necker himself partly guesses whither it is leading.[2] One highest culminating day, at the Paris Townhall; with immortal vivats, with wife and daughter kneeling publicly to kiss his hand; with Besenval's pardon granted,—but indeed revoked before sunset: one highest day, but then lower days, and ever lower, down even to lowest!

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[1] Arthur Young, i. 141. Dampmartin, *Evénemens qui se sont passés sous mes yeux*, i. 105-127.

[2] *Biographie Universelle*, § Necker (by Lally-Tollendal).

Such magic is in a name; and in the want of a name. Like some enchanted Mambrino's Helmet, essential to victory, comes this 'Saviour of France'; beshouted, becymballed by the world: alas, so soon to be *dis*enchanted, to be pitched shamefully over the lists as a Barber's Basin! Gibbon 'could wish to show him' (in this ejected, Barber's-Basin state) to any man of solidity, who were minded to have the soul burnt out of him, and become a *caput mortuum*, by Ambition, unsuccessful or successful.[1]

Another small phasis we add, and no more: how, in the Autumn months, our sharp-tempered Arthur has been 'pestered for some days past,' by shot, lead-drops and slugs, 'rattling five or six times into my chaise and about my ears'; all the mob of the country gone out to kill Game![2] It is even so. On the Cliffs of Dover, over all the Marches of France, there appear, this autumn, two signs on the Earth: emigrant flights of French Seigneurs; emigrant winged flights of French Game! Finished, one may say, or as good as finished, is the Preservation of Game on this Earth; completed for endless Time. What part *it* had to play in the History of Civilisation is played: *plaudite; exeat!*

In this manner does Sansculottism blaze up, illustrating many things;—producing, among the rest, as we saw, on the Fourth of August, that semi-miraculous Night of Pentecost in the National Assembly; semi-miraculous, which had its causes, and its effects. Feudalism is struck dead; not on parchment only, and by ink; but in very fact, by fire; say, by self-combustion. This conflagration of the South-East will abate; will be got scattered, to the West, or elsewhither: extinguish it will not, till the *fuel* be all done.

[1] Gibbon's *Letters*.

[2] Young, i. 176.

CHAPTER IV

IN QUEUE

If we look now at Paris, one thing is too evident: that the Bakers' shops have got their *Queues*, or Tails; their long strings of purchasers, arranged *in tail*, so that the first come be the first served,—were the shop once open! This waiting in tail, not seen since the early days of July, again makes its appearance in August. In time, we shall see it perfected by practice to the rank almost of an art; and the art, or quasi-art, of standing in tail become one of the characteristics of the Parisian People, distinguishing them from all other Peoples whatsoever.

But consider, while work itself is so scarce, how a man must not only realise money, but stand waiting (if his wife is too weak to wait and struggle) for half-days in the Tail, till he get it changed for dear bad bread! Controversies, to the length sometimes of blood and battery, must arise in these exasperated Queues. Or if no controversy, then it is but one accordant *Pange Lingua* of complaint against the Powers that be. France has begun her long Curriculum of Hungering, instructive and productive beyond Academic Curriculums; which extends over some seven most strenuous years. As Jean Paul says of his own Life 'to a great height shall the business of Hungering go.'

Or consider, in strange contrast, the jubilee Ceremonies; for, in general, the aspect of Paris presents these two features: jubilee ceremonials and scarcity of victual. Processions enough walk in jubilee; of Young Women, decked and dizened, their ribands all tricolor; moving with song and tabor, to the Shrine of Saint Geneviève, to thank her that the Bastille is down. The Strong Men of the Market, and the Strong Women, fail not with their bouquets and speeches. Abbé Fauchet, famed in such work (for Abbé Lefèvre could only distribute powder) blesses tricolor cloth for the National Guard; and makes it a National Tricolor Flag; victorious, or to be victorious, in the cause of civil and religious liberty all over the world. Fauchet, we say, is the man for *Te-Deums*, and public Consecrations;—to which, as in this instance of the Flag, our National Guard will 'reply with volleys of musketry,' Church and Cathedral though it be;[1] filling Notre Dame with such noisiest fuliginous *Amen*, significant of several things.

On the whole, we will say our new Mayor Bailly, our new Commander Lafayette named also 'Scipio-Americanus,' have bought their preferment dear. Bailly rides in gilt state-coach, with beef-eaters and sumptuosity; Camille Desmoulins, and others, sniffing at him for it: Scipio bestrides the 'white charger,' and waves with civic plumes in sight of all France. Neither of them, however, does it for nothing; but, in truth, at an exorbitant rate. At this rate, namely: of feeding Paris, and keeping it from fighting. Out of the City-funds, some seventeen thousand of the utterly destitute are employed digging on Montmarte, at tenpence a day, which buys them, at market price, almost two pounds of bad bread:—they look very yellow, when Lafayette goes to harangue them. The Townhall is in travail, night and day; it must bring forth Bread, a Municipal Constitution, regulations of all kinds, curbs on the Sansculottic Press; above all, Bread, Bread.

Purveyors prowl the country far and wide, with the appetite of lions; detect hidden grain, purchase open grain; by gentle means or forcible, must and will find grain. A most thankless task; and so difficult, so dangerous,—even if a man did gain some trifle by it! On the 19th of August, there is food for one day.[2] Complaints there are that the food is spoiled, and produces an effect on the intestines: not corn but plaster-of-paris! Which effect on the intestines, as well as that 'smarting in the throat and palate,' a Townhall Proclamation warns you to disregard, or even to consider as drastic-beneficial. The Mayor of Saint-Denis, so black was his bread, has, by a dyspeptic populace, been hanged on the Lanterne there. National Guards protect the Paris Corn-Market: first ten suffice; then six hundred.[1] Busy are ye, Bailly, Brissot de Warville, Condorcet, and ye others!

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[1] See *Hist. Parl.* iii. 20; Mercier, *Nouveau Paris*, etc.

[2] See Bailly, *Mémoires*, ii. 137-409.

For, as just hinted, there is a Municipal Constitution to be made too. The old Bastille Electors, after some ten days of psalmodying over their glorious victory, began to hear it asked, in a splenetic tone, Who put *you* there? They accordingly had to give place, not without moanings and audible growlings on both sides, to a new larger Body, specially elected for that post. Which new Body, augmented, altered, then fixed finally at the number of Three Hundred, with the title of Town Representatives (*Représentans de la Commune*), now sits there; rightly portioned into Committees; assiduous making a Constitution, at all moments when not seeking flour.

And such a Constitution; little short of miraculous: one that shall 'consolidate the Revolution'! The Revolution is finished, then? Mayor Bailly and all respectable friends of Freedom would fain think so. Your Revolution, like jelly sufficiently *boiled*, needs only to be poured into *shapes*, or Constitution, and 'consolidated' therein? Could it, indeed, contrive to *cool*; which last, however, is precisely the doubtful thing, or even the not doubtful!

Unhappy Friends of Freedom; consolidating a Revolution! They must sit at work there, their pavilion spread on very Chaos; between two hostile worlds, the Upper Court-world, the nether Sansculottic one; and, beaten on by both, toil painfully, perilously,—doing, in sad literal earnest, 'the impossible.'

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[1] *Hist. Parl.* ii. 421.

CHAPTER V

THE FOURTH ESTATE

PAMPHLETEERING opens its abysmal throat wider and wider; never to close more. Our Philosophes, indeed, rather withdraw; after the manner of Marmontel, 'retiring in disgust the first day.' Abbé Raynal, grown grey and quiet in his Marseilles domicile, is little content with this work: the last literary act of the man will again be an act of rebellion; an indignant *Letter to the Constituent Assembly*; answered by 'the order of the day.' Thus also Philosophe Morellet puckers discontented brows; being indeed threatened in his benefices by that Fourth of August: it is clearly going too far. How astonishing that those 'haggard figures in woollen jupes' would not rest as satisfied with Speculation, and victorious Analysis, as we!

Alas, yes: Speculation, Philosophism, once the ornament and wealth of the saloon, will now coin itself into mere Practical Propositions, and circulate on street and highway, universally; with results! A Fourth Estate, of Able Editors, springs up; increases and multiplies; irrepressible, incalculable. New Printers, new Journals, and ever new (so prurient is the world), let our Three Hundred curb and consolidate as they can! Loustalot, under the wing of Prudhomme dull-blustering Printer, edits weekly his *Révolutions de Paris*; in an acrid, emphatic manner. Acrid, corrosive, as the spirit of sloes and copperas, is Marat, *Friend of the People*; struck already with the fact that the National Assembly, so full of Aristocrats, 'can do nothing,' except dissolve itself and make way for a better; that the Townhall Representatives are little other than babblers and imbeciles, if not even knaves. Poor is this man; squalid, and dwells in garrets; a man unlovely to the sense, outward and inward; a man forbid;—

and is becoming fanatical, possessed with fixed-idea. Cruel *lusus* of Nature! Did Nature, O poor Marat, as in cruel sport, knead thee out of her *leavings* and miscellaneous waste clay; and fling thee forth, stepdame-like, a Distraction into this distracted Eighteenth Century? Work is appointed thee there; which thou shalt do. The Three Hundred have summoned and will again summon Marat: but always he croaks-forth answer sufficient; always he will defy them, or elude them; and endure no gag.

Carra, 'Ex-secretary of a decapitated Hospodar, and then of a Necklace-Cardinal; likewise Pamphleteer, Adventurer in many scenes and lands,—draws nigh to Mercier, of the *Tableau de Paris*; and, with foam on his lips, proposes an *Annales Patriotiques.* The *Moniteur* goes its prosperous way; Barrère 'weeps,' on Paper as yet loyal; Rivarol, Royou are not idle. Deep calls to deep: your *Domine Salvum Fac Regem* shall awaken *Pange Lingua*; with an *Ami-du-Peuple* there is a King's-Friend Newspaper, *Ami-du-Roi.* Camille Desmoulins has appointed himself *Procureur-Général de la Lanterne,* Attorney-General of the Lamp-iron; and pleads, *not* with atrocity, under an atrocious title; editing weekly his brilliant *Revolutions of Paris and Brabant.* Brilliant, we say; for if, in that thick murk of Journalism, with its dull blustering, with its fixed or loose fury, any ray of genius greet thee, be sure it is Camille's. The thing that Camille touches, he with his light finger adorns; brightness plays, gentle, unexpected, amid horrible confusions; often is the word of Camille worth reading, when no other's is. Questionable Camille, how thou glitterest with a fallen, rebellious, yet still semi-celestial light; as is the starlight on the brow of Lucifer! Son of the Morning, into what times and what lands art thou fallen!

But in all things there is good;—though it be not good for 'consolidating Revolutions.' Thousand wagon-loads of this Pamphleteering and Newspaper matter lie rotting slowly in the Public Libraries of our Europe. Snatched from the great gulf, like oysters by bibliomaniac pearl-divers, there must they first *rot*, then what was pearl, in Camille or others, may be seen as such, and continue as such.

Nor has public speaking declined, though Lafayette and his Patrols look sour on it. Loud always is the Palais Royal, loudest the Café de Foy; such a miscellany of Citizens and Citizenesses circulating there. 'Now and then,' according to Camille, 'some Citizens employ the liberty of the *press* for a private purpose; so that this or the other Patriot finds himself short of his watch or pocket-handkerchief!' But for the rest, in Camille's opinion, nothing can be a livelier image of the Roman Forum. 'A Patriot proposes his motion; if it finds any supporters, they make him mount on a chair, and speak. If he is applauded, he prospers and redacts; if he is hissed, he goes his ways.' Thus they, circulating and perorating. Tall shaggy Marquis Saint-Huruge, a man that has had losses, and has deserved them, is seen eminent, and also heard. 'Bellowing' is the character of his voice, like that of a Bull of Bashan; voice which drowns all voices, which causes frequently the hearts of men to leap. Cracked or half-cracked is this tall Marquis's head; uncracked are his lungs; the cracked and the uncracked shall alike avail him.

Consider further that each of the Forty-eight Districts has its own Committee; speaking and motioning continually; aiding in the search for grain, in the search for a Constitution; checking and spurring the poor Three Hundred of the Town-hall. That Danton, with a 'voice reverberating from the domes,' is President of the Cordeliers District; which has already become a Goshen of Patriotism. That apart from the 'seventeen thousand utterly necessitous, digging on Montmartre,' most of whom, indeed, have got passes, and been dismissed into Space 'with four shillings,'—there is a *strike*, or union, of Domestics out of place; who assemble for public speaking: next, a strike of Tailors, for even they will strike and speak; further, a strike of Journeymen Cordwainers; a strike of Apothecaries: so dear is bread.[1] All these, having struck, must speak; generally under the open canopy; and pass resolutions;—Lafayette and his Patrols watching them suspiciously from the distance.

Unhappy mortals: such tugging and lugging, and throttling of one another, to divide, in some not intolerable way, the joint Felicity of man in this Earth; when the whole lot to be divided is such a 'feast of *shells*'!—Diligent are the Three Hundred; none equals Scipio-Americanus in dealing with mobs. But surely all these things bode ill for the consolidating of a Revolution.

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[1] *Histoire Parlementaire*, ii. 359, 417, 423.

BOOK SEVENTH

THE INSURRECTION OF WOMEN

CHAPTER I

PATROLLOTISM

No, Friends, this Revolution is not of the consolidating kind. Do not fires, fevers, sown seeds, chemical mixtures, men, events,—all embodiments of Force that work in this miraculous Complex of Forces named Universe,—go on *growing*, through their natural phases and developments each according to its kind; reach their height, reach their visible decline; finally sink under, vanishing, and what we call *die?* They all grow; there is nothing but what grows, and shoots forth into its special expansion,—once give it leave to spring. Observe too that each grows with a rapidity proportioned, in general, to the madness and unhealthiness there is in it; slow regular growth, though this also ends in death, is what we name health and sanity.

A Sansculottism, which has prostrated Bastilles, which has got pike and musket, and now goes burning Châteaus, passing resolutions and haranguing under roof and sky, may be said to have sprung; and, by law of Nature, must grow. To judge by the madness and diseasedness both of itself, and of the soil and element it is in, one might expect the rapidity and monstrosity would be extreme.

Many things, too, especially all diseased things, grow by shoots and fits. The first grand fit and shooting-forth of Sansculottism was that of Paris conquering its King; for Bailly's figure of rhetoric was all-too sad a reality. The King is conquered; going at large on his parole; on condition, say, of absolutely good behaviour,—which, in these circumstances, will unhappily mean no behaviour whatever. A quite untenable position, that of Majesty put on its good behaviour! Alas, is it not natural that whatever lives try to keep itself living? Whereupon his Majesty's behaviour will soon become exceptionable; and so the Second grand Fit of Sansculottism, that of putting him in durance, cannot be distant.

Necker, in the National Assembly, is making moan, as usual, about his Deficit: Barriers and Customhouses burnt; the Tax-gatherer hunted, not hunting; his Majesty's Exchequer all but empty. The remedy is a Loan of thirty millions; then, on still more enticing terms, a Loan of eighty millions: neither of which Loans, unhappily, will the Stockjobbers venture to lend. The Stockjobber has no country, except his own black pool of *Agio*.

And yet, in those days, for men that have a country, what a glow of patriotism burns in many a heart; penetrating inwards to the very purse! So early as the 7th of August, a *Don Patriotique*, 'Patriotic Gift of jewels to a considerable extent,' has been solemnly made by certain Parisian women; and solemnly accepted with honourable mention. Whom forthwith all the world takes to imitating and emulating. Patriotic Gifts, always with some heroic eloquence, which the President must answer and the Assembly listen to, flow in from far and near: in such number that the honourable mention can only be performed in 'lists published at stated epochs.' Each gives what he can: the very cordwainers have behaved munificently; one landed proprietor gives a forest; fashionable society gives its shoe-buckles, takes cheerfully to shoeties. Unfortunate-females give what they 'have amassed in loving.'[1] The smell of all cash, as Vespasian thought, is good.

Beautiful, and yet inadequate! The Clergy must be 'invited' to melt their superfluous Church-plate,—in the Royal

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[1] *Histoire Parlementaire*, ii. 427.

Mint. Nay finally, a Patriotic Contribution, of the forcible sort, has to be determined on, though unwillingly: let the fourth part of your declared yearly revenue, for this once only, be paid down; so shall a National Assembly make the Constitution, undistracted at least by insolvency. Their own wages, as settled on the 17th of August, are but Eighteen Francs a day, each man; but the Public Service must have sinews, must have money. To *appease* the Deficit; not to '*combler*, or choke, the Deficit,' if you or mortal could! For withal, as Mirabeau was heard saying, 'it is the Deficit that saves us.'

Towards the end of August, our National Assembly in its constitutional labours has got so far as the question of *Veto*: shall Majesty have a Veto on the National Enactments; or not have a Veto? What speeches were spoken, within doors and without; clear, and also passionate logic; imprecations, comminations; gone happily, for most part, to Limbo! Through the cracked brain and uncracked lungs of Saint-Huruge, the Palais Royal rebellows with Veto. Journalism is busy, France rings with Veto. 'I never shall forget,' says Dumont, 'my going to Paris, one of those days, with Mirabeau; and the crowd of people we found waiting for his carriage about Le Jay the Bookseller's shop. They flung themselves before him; conjuring him, with tears in their eyes, not to suffer the *Veto Absolu.* They were in a frenzy: "Monsieur le Comte, you are the People's father, you must save us; you must defend us against those villains who are bringing back Despotism. If the King get this Veto, what is the use of National Assembly? We are slaves; all is done."'[1] Friends, *if* the sky fall, there will be catching of larks! Mirabeau, adds Dumont, was eminent on such occasions: he answered vaguely, with a Patrician imperturbability, and bound himself to nothing.

Deputations go to the Hôtel-de-Ville; anonymous Letters to Aristocrats in the National Assembly, threatening that fifteen thousand, or sometimes that sixty thousand, 'will march to illuminate you.' The Paris Districts are astir; Petitions signing: Saint-Huruge sets forth from the Palais Royal with an escort of fifteen hundred individuals, to petition in person. Resolute, or seemingly so, is the tall shaggy Marquis, is the Café de Foy: but resolute also is Commandant-General-Lafayette. The streets are all beset by Patrols: Saint-Huruge is stopped at the *Barrière des Bons Hommes*; he may bellow like the bulls of Bashan, but absolutely must return. The brethren of the Palais Royal 'circulate all night,' and make motions, under the open canopy; all Coffeehouses being shut. Nevertheless Lafayette and the Townhall do prevail; Saint-Huruge is thrown into prison; *Veto Absolu* adjusts itself into *Suspensive Veto*, prohibition not for ever, but for a term of time; and this doom's-clamour will grow silent, as the others have done.

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[1] *Souvenirs sur Mirabeau*, p. 156.

So far has Consolidation prospered, though with difficulty; repressing the Nether Sansculottic world; and the Constitution shall be made. With difficulty: amid jubilee and scarcity; Patriotic Gifts, Bakers'-queues; Abbé-Fauchet Harangues, with their *Amen* of platoon-musketry! Scipio-Americanus has deserved thanks from the National Assembly and France. They offer him stipends and emoluments to a handsome extent; all which stipends and emoluments he, covetous of far other blessedness than mere money, does, in his chivalrous way, without scruple, refuse.

To the Parisian common man, meanwhile, one thing remains inconceivable: that now when the Bastille is down, and French Liberty restored, grain should continue so dear. Our Rights of Man are voted, Feudalism and all Tyranny abolished; yet behold we stand *in queue*! Is it Aristocrat forestallers; a Court still bent on intrigues? Something is rotten somewhere.

And yet, alas, what to do? Lafayette, with his Patrols, prohibits everything, even complaint. Saint-Huruge and other heroes of the *Veto* lie in durance. People's-Friend Marat was seized; Printers of Patriotic Journals are fettered and forbidden; the very Hawkers cannot cry, till they get licence and leaden badges. Blue National Guards ruthlessly dissipate all groups; scour, with levelled bayonets, the Palais Royal itself. Pass, on your affairs, along the Rue Taranne, the Patrol, presenting his bayonet, cries, *To the left!* Turn into the Rue Saint-Bénoit, he cries, *To the right!* A judicious Patriot (like Camille Desmoulins, in this instance) is driven, for quietness' sake, to take the gutter.

O much-suffering People, our glorious Revolution is evaporating in tricolor ceremonies and complimentary harangues! Of which latter, as Loustalot acridly calculates, 'upwards of two thousand have been delivered within the last month at the Townhall alone.'[1] And our mouths, unfilled with bread are to be shut, under penalties? The Caricaturist promulgates his emblematic Tablature: *Le Patrouillotisme chassant le Patriotisme*, Patriotism driven out by Patrollotism. Ruthless Patrols; long superfine harangues; and scanty ill-baked loaves, more like baked Bath bricks,—which produce an effect on the intestines! Where will this end? In consolidation?

CHAPTER II

O RICHARD, O MY KING

For, alas, neither is the Townhall itself without misgivings. The Nether Sansculottic world has been suppressed hitherto. but then the Upper Court-world! Symptoms there are that the Œil-de-Bœuf is rallying.

More than once in the Townhall Sanhedrim, often enough from those outspoken Bakers'-queues, has the wish uttered itself: O that our Restorer of French Liberty were here; that he could see with his own eyes, not with the false eyes of Queens and Cabals, and his really good heart be enlightened! For falsehood still environs him; intriguing Dukes de Guiche, with Bodyguards; scouts of Bouillé; a new flight of intriguers, now that the old is flown. What else means this advent of the *Regiment de Flandre*; entering Versailles, as we hear, on the 23d of September, with two pieces of cannon? Did not the Versailles National Guard do duty at the Château? Had they not Swiss; Hundred Swiss; *Gardes-du-Corps*, Bodyguards so-called? Nay, it would seem, the number of Bodyguards on duty has, by a manœuvre, been doubled: the new relieving Battalion of them arrived at its time; but the old relieved one does not *depart*!

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[1] *Révolutions de Paris Newspaper* (cited in *Histoire Parlementaire*, ii. 357).

Actually, there runs a whisper through the best-informed Upper-Circles, or a nod still more portentous than whispering, of his Majesty's flying to Metz; of a Bond (to stand by him therein), which has been signed by Noblesse and Clergy, to the incredible amount of thirty, or even of sixty thousand. Lafayette coldly whispers it, and coldly asseverates it, to Count d'Estaing at the Dinner-table; and D'Estaing, one of the bravest men, quakes to the core lest some lackey overhear it; and tumbles thoughtful, without sleep, all night.[1] Regiment de Flandre, as we said, is clearly arrived. His Majesty, they say, hesitates about sanctioning the Fourth of August; makes observations, of chilling tenor, on the very Rights of Man! Likewise, may not all persons, the Bakers'-queues themselves discern, on the streets of Paris, the most astonishing number of Officers on furlough, Crosses of St. Louis, and suchlike? Some reckon 'from a thousand to twelve hundred.' Officers of all uniforms; nay one uniform never before seen by eye: green faced with red! The tricolor cockade is not always visible: but what, in the name of Heaven, may these *black* cockades, which some wear, foreshadow?

Hunger whets everything, especially Suspicion and Indignation. Realities themselves, in this Paris, have grown unreal, preternatural. Phantasms once more stalk through the brain of hungry France. O ye laggards and dastards, cry shrill voices from the Queues, if ye had the hearts of men, ye would take your pikes and secondhand firelocks, and look into it; not leave your wives and daughters to be starved, murdered and worse!—Peace, women! The heart of man is bitter and heavy; Patriotism, driven out by Patrollotism, knows not what to resolve on.

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[1] *Brouillon de Lettre de M. d'Estaing à la Reine* (in *Histoire Parlementaire*, iii. 24).

The truth is, the Œil-de-Bœuf has rallied; to a certain unknown extent. A changed Œil-de-Bœuf; with Versailles National Guards, in their tricolor cockades, doing duty there; a Court all flaring with tricolor! Yet even to a tricolor Court men will rally. Ye loyal hearts, burnt-out Seigneurs, rally round your Queen! With wishes; which will produce hopes; which will produce attempts!

For indeed self-preservation being such a law of Nature, what can a rallied Court do, but attempt and endeavour, or call it *plot*,—with such wisdom and unwisdom as it has? They will fly, escorted, to Metz, where brave Bouillé commands; they will raise the Royal Standard: the Bond-signatures shall become armed men. Were not the King so languid! Their Bond, if at all signed, must be signed without his privity.—Unhappy King, *he* has but one resolution: not to have a civil war. For the rest, he still hunts, having ceased lockmaking; he still dozes, and digests; is clay in the hands of the potter. Ill will it fare with him, in a world where all is helping itself; where, as has been written, 'whosoever is not hammer must be stithy'; and 'the very hyssop on the wall grows there, in that chink, because the whole Universe could not prevent its growing!'

But as for the coming-up of this Regiment de Flandre, may it not be urged that there were Saint-Huruge Petitions, and continual meal-mobs? Undebauched Soldiers, be there plot, or only dim elements of a plot, are always good. Did not the Versailles Municipality (an old Monarchic one, not yet refounded into a Democratic) instantly second the proposal? Nay the very Versailles National Guard, wearied with continual duty at the Château, did not object; only Draper Lecointre, who is now Major Lecointre, shook his head.—Yes, Friends, surely it was natural this Regiment de Flandre should be sent for, since it could be got. It was natural that, at sight of military bandoleers, the heart of the rallied Œil-de-Bœuf should revive; and Maids of Honour, and gentlemen of honour, speak comfortable words to epauletted defenders and to one another. Natural also, and mere common civility, that the Bodyguards, a Regiment of Gentlemen, should invite their Flandre brethren to a Dinner of welcome!—Such invitation, in the last days of September, is given and accepted.

Dinners are defined as 'the *ultimate* act of communion'; men that can have communion in nothing else, can sympathetically eat together, can still rise into some glow of brotherhood over food and wine. The Dinner is fixed on, for Thursday the First of October; and ought to have a fine effect. Further, as such Dinner may be rather extensive, and even the Noncommissioned and the Common man be introduced, to see and to hear, could not his Majesty's Opera Apartment, which has lain quite silent ever since Kaiser Joseph was here, be obtained for the purpose?—The Hall of the Opera is granted; the Salon d'Hercule shall be drawing-room. Not only the Officers of Flandre, but of the Swiss, of the Hundred Swiss; nay of the Versailles National Guard, such of them as have any loyalty, shall feast: it will be a Repast like few.

And now suppose this Repast, the solid part of it, transacted; and the first bottle over. Suppose the customary loyal toasts drunk; the King's health, the Queen's with deafening vivats;—that of the Nation 'omitted,' or even 'rejected.' Suppose champagne flowing; with pot-valorous speech, with instrumental music; empty featherheads growing ever the noisier, in their own emptiness, in each others' noise.

Her Majesty, who looks unusually sad tonight (his Majesty sitting dulled with the day's hunting), is told that the sight of it would cheer her. Behold! She enters there, issuing from her State-rooms, like the Moon from clouds, this fairest unhappy Queen of Hearts; royal Husband by her side, young Dauphin in her arms! She descends from the Boxes, amid splendour and acclaim; walks queenlike round the Tables; gracefully escorted, gracefully nodding; her looks full of sorrow, yet of gratitude and daring, with the hope of France on her mother-bosom! And now, the band striking up, *O Richard, O mon Roi, l'univers t'abandonne* (O Richard, O my King, the world is all forsaking thee), could man do other than rise to height of pity, of loyal valour? Could feather-headed young ensigns do other than, by white Bourbon Cockades, handed them from fair fingers; by waving of swords, drawn to pledge the Queen's health; by trampling of National Cockades; by scaling the Boxes, whence intrusive murmurs may come; by vociferation, tripudiation, sound, fury and distraction, within doors and without,—testify what tempest-tost state of vacuity they are in? Till champagne and tripudiation do their work; and all lie silent, horizontal; passively slumbering with meed-of-battle dreams!—

A natural Repast; in ordinary times, a harmless one: now fatal, as that of Thyestes; as that of Job's Sons, when a strong wind smote the four corners of their banquet-house! Poor ill-advised Marie-Antoinette; with a woman's vehemence, not with a sovereign's foresight! It was so natural, yet so unwise. Next day, in public speech of ceremony, her Majesty declares herself 'delighted with the Thursday.'

The heart of the Œil-de-Bœuf glows into hope; into daring, which is premature. Rallied Maids of Honour, waited on by Abbés, sew 'white cockades'; distribute them, with words, with glances, to epauletted youths; who, in return, may kiss, not without fervour, the fair sewing fingers. Captains of horse and foot go swashing with 'enormous white cockades'; nay one Versailles National Captain has mounted the like, so witching were the words and glances, and laid aside his tricolor! Well may Major Lecointre shake his head with a look of severity; and speak audible resentful words. But now a swashbuckler, with enormous white cockade, overhearing the Major, invites him insolently, once and then again elsewhere, to recant; and failing that, to duel. Which latter feat Major Lecointre declares that he will not perform, not at least by any known laws of fence; that he nevertheless will, according to mere law of Nature, by dirk and blade, 'exterminate' any 'vile gladiator' who may insult him or the Nation;—whereupon (for the Major is actually drawing his implement) 'they are parted,' and no weasands slit.[1]

CHAPTER III

BLACK COCKADES

But fancy what effect this Thyestes Repast, and trampling on the National Cockade, must have had in the *Salle des Menus*; in the famishing Bakers'-queues at Paris! Nay such Thyestes Repasts, it would seem, continue. Flandre has given its Counter-Dinner to the Swiss and Hundred Swiss; then on Saturday there has been another.

Yes, here with us is famine; but yonder at Versailles is food, enough and to spare! Patriotism stands in queue, shivering hunger-struck, insulted by Patrollotism; while bloodyminded Aristocrats, heated with excess of high living, trample on the National Cockade. Can the atrocity be true? Nay look: green uniforms faced with red; black cockades,—the colour of Night! are we to have military onfall; and death also by starvation? For, behold, the Corbeil Cornboat, which used to come twice a day, with its plaster-of-paris meal, now comes only once. And the Townhall is deaf; and the men are laggard and dastard!—At the Café de Foy, this Saturday evening, a new thing is seen, not the last of its kind: a woman engaged in public speaking. Her poor man, she says, was put to silence by his District; their Presidents and Officials would not let him speak. Wherefore she here, with her shrill tongue, will speak; denouncing, while her breath endures, the Corbeil Boat, the plaster-of-paris bread, sacrilegious Opera-dinners, green uniforms, Pirate Aristocrats, and those black cockades of theirs!—

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[1] *Moniteur* (in *Histoire Parlementaire*, iii. 59); *Deux Amis*, iii. 128-141; Campan, ii. 70-85; etc. etc.

Truly, it is time for the black cockades at least to vanish. Them Patrollotism itself will not protect. Nay sharp-tempered 'M. Tassin,' at the Tuileries parade on Sunday morning, forgets all National military rule; starts from the ranks, wrenches down one black cockade which is swashing ominous there, and tramples it fiercely into the soil of France. Patrollotism itself is not without suppressed fury. Also the Districts begin to stir; the voice of President Danton reverberates in the Cordeliers: People's-Friend Marat has flown to Versailles and back again;—swart bird, not of the halcyon kind.[1]

And so Patriot meets promenading Patriot, this Sunday; and sees his own grim care reflected on the face of another. Groups, in spite of Patrollotism, which is not so alert as usual, fluctuate deliberative; groups on the Bridges, on the Quais, at the patriotic Cafés. And ever as any black cockade may emerge, rises the many-voiced growl and bark: *À bas*, Down! All black cockades are ruthlessly plucked off: one individual picks his up again; kisses it, attempts to refix it; but a 'hundred canes start into the air,' and he desists. Still worse went it with another individual; doomed, by extempore *Plebiscitum*, to the Lanterne; saved, with difficulty, by some active *Corps-de-Garde*.—Lafayette sees signs of an effervescence; which he doubles his Patrols, doubles his diligence, to prevent. So passes Sunday the 4th of October 1789.

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[1] Camille's Newspaper, *Révolutions de Paris et de Brabant* (in *Histoire Parlementaire*, iii. 108).

Sullen is the male heart, repressed by Patrollotism; vehement is the female, irrepressible. The public-speaking woman at the Palais Royal was not the only speaking one:—Men know not what the pantry is, when it grows empty; only house-mothers know. O women, wives of men that will only calculate and not act! Patrollotism is strong; but Death, by starvation and military onfall, is stronger. Patrollotism represses male Patriotism: but female Patriotism? Will Guards named National thrust their bayonets into the bosoms of women? Such thought, or rather such dim unshaped raw material of a thought, ferments universally under the female nightcap; and, by earliest daybreak, on slight hint, will explode.

CHAPTER IV

THE MENADS

If Voltaire once, in splenetic humour, asked his countrymen: 'But you, *Gualches,* what have you invented?' they can now answer: The Art of Insurrection. It was an art needed in these last singular times: an art for which the French nature, so full of vehemence, so free from depth, was perhaps of all others the fittest.

Accordingly, to what a height, one may well say of perfection, has this branch of human industry been carried by France, within the last half-century! Insurrection, which Lafayette thought might be 'the most sacred of duties,' ranks now, for the French people, among the duties which they can perform. Other mobs are dull masses; which roll onwards with a dull fierce heat, but emit no light-flashes of genius as they go. The French mob, again, is among the liveliest phenomena of our world. So rapid, audacious; so clear-sighted, inventive, prompt to seize the moment; instinct with life to its finger-ends! That talent, were there no other, of spontaneously standing in queue, distinguishes, as we said, the French People from all Peoples, ancient and modern.

Let the Reader confess too that, taking one thing with another, perhaps few terrestrial Appearances are better worth considering than mobs. Your mob is a genuine outburst of Nature; issuing from, or communicating with, the deepest deep of Nature. When so much goes grinning and grimacing as a lifeless Formality, and under the stiff buckram no heart can be felt beating, here once more, if nowhere else, is a Sincerity and Reality. Shudder at it; or even shriek over it, if thou must; nevertheless consider it. Such a Complex of human Forces and Individualities hurled forth, in their transcendental mood, to act and react, on circumstances and on one another; to work out what it is in them to work. The thing they will do is known to no man; least of all to themselves. It is the inflammablest immeasurable Firework, generating, consuming itself. With what phases, to what extent, with what results it will burn off, Philosophy and Perspicacity conjecture in vain.

'Man,' as has been written, 'is for ever interesting to man; nay properly there is nothing else interesting.' In which light also may we not discern why most Battles have become so wearisome? Battles, in these ages, are transacted by mechanism; with the slightest possible development of human individuality or spontaneity: men now even die, and kill one another, in an artificial manner. Battles ever since Homer's time, when they were Fighting Mobs, have mostly ceased to be worth looking at, worth reading of or remembering. How many wearisome bloody Battles does History strive to represent; or even, in a husky way, to sing:—and she would omit or carelessly slur-over this one Insurrection of Women?

A thought, or dim raw-material of a thought, was fermenting all night, universally in the female head, and might explode. In squalid garret, on Monday morning, Maternity awakes, to hear children weeping for bread. Maternity must forth to the streets, to the herb-markets and Bakers'-queues; meets there with hunger-stricken Maternity, sympathetic, exasperative. O we unhappy women! But, instead of Bakers'-queues, why not to Aristocrats' palaces, the root of the matter? *Allons!* Let us assemble. To the Hôtel-de-Ville; to Versailles; to the Lanterne!

In one of the Guardhouses of the Quartier Saint-Eustache, 'a young woman' seizes a drum—for how shall National Guards give fire on women, on a young woman? The young woman seizes the drum; sets forth, beating it, 'uttering cries relative to the dearth of grains.' Descend, O mothers; descend, ye Judiths, to food and revenge!—All women gather and go; crowds storm all stairs, force out all women: the female Insurrectionary Force, according to Camille, resembles the English Naval one; there is a universal 'Press of women.' Robust Dames of the Halle, slim Mantua-makers, assiduous, risen with the dawn; ancient Virginity tripping to matins; the Housemaid, with early broom; all must go. Rouse ye, O women; the laggard men will not act; they say, we ourselves may act!

And so, like snowbreak from the mountains, for every staircase is a melted brook, it storms; tumultuous, wild-shrilling, towards the Hôtel-de-Ville. Tumultuous; with or without drum-music: for the Faubourg Saint-Antoine also has tucked-up its gown; and with besom-staves, fire-irons, and even rusty pistols (void of ammunition), is flowing on. Sound of it flies, with a velocity of sound, to the utmost Barriers. By seven o'clock, on this raw October morning, fifth of the month, the Townhall will see wonders. Nay, as chance would have it, a male party are already there; clustering tumultuously round some National Patrol, and a Baker who has been seized with short weights. They are there; and have even lowered the rope of the Lanterne. So that the official persons have to smuggle forth the short-weighing Baker by back-doors, and even send 'to all the Districts' for more force.

Grand it was, says Camille, to see so many Judiths, from eight to ten thousand of them in all, rushing out to search into the root of the matter! Not unfrightful it must have been; ludicro-terrific, and most unmanageable. At such hour the overwatched Three Hundred are not yet stirring: none but some Clerks, a company of National Guards; and M. de Gouvion, the Major-general. Gouvion has fought in America for the cause of civil Liberty; a man of no inconsiderable heart, but deficient in head. He is, for the moment, in his back apartment; assuaging Usher Maillard, the Bastille-sergeant, who has come, as too many do, with 'representations.' The assuagement is still incomplete when our Judiths arrive.

The National Guards form on the outer stairs with levelled bayonets; the ten thousand Judiths press up, resistless; with obtestations, with outspread hands,—merely to speak to the Mayor. The rear forces them; nay from male hands in the rear, stones already fly: the National Guard must do one of two things; sweep the Place de Grève with cannon, or else open to right and left. They open; the living deluge rushes in. Through all rooms and cabinets, upwards to the topmost belfry: ravenous; seeking arms, seeking Mayors, seeking justice;—while, again, the better-dressed speak kindly to the Clerks; point out the misery of these poor women; also their ailments, some even of an interesting sort.[1]

Poor M. de Gouvion is shiftless in this extremity;—a man shiftless, perturbed: who will one day commit suicide. How happy for him that Usher Maillard the shifty was there, at the moment, though making representations! Fly back, thou shifty Maillard: seek the Bastille Company; and O return fast with it; above all, with thy own shifty head: For, behold, the Judiths can find no Mayor or Municipal, scarcely, in the topmost belfry, can they find poor Abbé Lefèvre the Powder-distributor. Him, for want of a better, they suspend there: in the pale morning light; over the top of all Paris, which swims in one's failing eyes:—a horrible end? Nay the rope broke, as French ropes often did; or else an Amazon cut it. Abbé Lefèvre falls, some twenty feet, rattling among the leads; and lives long years after, though always with 'a *tremblement* in the limbs.'[1]

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[1] *Deux Amis*, iii. 141-166.

And now doors fly under hatchets; the Judiths have broken the Armory; have seized guns and cannons, three money-bags, paper-heaps; torches flare: in few minutes, our brave Hôtel-de-Ville, which dates from the Fourth Henry, will, with all that it holds, be in flames!

CHAPTER V

USHER MAILLARD

In flames, truly,—were it not that Usher Maillard, swift of foot, shifty of head, has returned!

Maillard, of his own motion,—for Gouvion or the rest would not even sanction him,—snatches a drum; descends the Porch-stairs, ran-tan, beating sharp, with loud rolls, his Rogues'-march: To Versailles! *Allons; à Versailles!* As men beat on kettle or warming-pan, when angry she-bees, or say, flying desperate wasps, are to be hived; and the desperate insects hear it, and cluster round it,—simply as round *a* guidance, where there was none: so now these Menads round shifty Maillard, Riding-Usher of the Châtelet. The axe pauses uplifted; Abbé Lefèvre is left half-hanged: from the belfry downwards all vomits itself. What a rub-a-dub is that? Stanislas Maillard, Bastille hero, will lead us to Versailles? Joy to thee, Maillard; blessed art thou above Riding-Ushers! Away, then, away!

The seized cannon are yoked with seized cart-horses· brown-locked Demoiselle Théroigne, with pike and helmet, sits there as gunneress, 'with haughty eye and serene fair countenance'; comparable, some think, to the *Maid* of Orléans, or even recalling 'the idea of Pallas Athene.'[1] Maillard (for his drum still rolls) is, by heaven-rending acclamation, admitted General. Maillard hastens the languid march. Maillard, beating rhythmic, with sharp ran-tan, all along the Quais, leads forward, with difficulty, his Menadic host. Such a host—marched not in silence! The bargeman pauses on the River; all wagoners and coach-drivers fly; men peer from windows,—not women, lest they be pressed. Sight of sights: Bacchantes, in these ultimate Formalised Ages! Bronze Henri looks on, from his Pont-Neuf; the Monarchic Louvre, Medicean Tuileries see a day like none heretofore seen.

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[1] Dusaulx, *Prise de la Bastille*, note, p. 281.

And now Maillard has his Menads in the *Champs Elysées* (Fields *Tartarean* rather); and the Hôtel-de-Ville has suffered comparatively nothing. Broken doors; an Abbé Lefèvre, who shall never more distribute powder; three sacks of money, most part of which (for Sansculottism, though famishing, is not without honour) shall be returned:[2] this is all the damage. Great Maillard! A small nucleus of Order is round his drum; but his outskirts fluctuate like the mad Ocean: for Rascality male and female is flowing in on him, from the four winds: guidance there is none but in his single head and two drum-sticks.

O Maillard, when, since War first was, had General of Force such a task before him as thou this day? Walter the Penniless still touches the feeling heart: but then Walter had sanction; had space to turn in; and also his Crusaders were of the male sex. Thou, this day, disowned of Heaven and Earth, art General of Menads. Their inarticulate frenzy thou must, on the spur of the instant, render into articulate words, into actions that are not frantic. Fail in it, this way or that! Pragmatical Officiality, with its penalties and law-books, waits before thee; Menads storm behind. If such hewed off the melodious head of Orpheus, and hurled it into the Peneus waters, what may they not make of thee,—thee rhythmic merely, with no music but a sheepskin drum!—Maillard did not fail. Remarkable Maillard, if fame were not an accident, and History a distillation of Rumour, how remarkable wert thou!

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[1] *Deux Amis*, iii. 157.

[2] *Hist. Parl.* iii. 310.

On the Elysian Fields there is pause and fluctuation; but, for Maillard, no return. He persuades his Menads, clamorous for arms and the Arsenal, that no arms are in the Arsenal; that an unarmed attitude, and petition to a National Assembly, will be the best: he hastily nominates or sanctions generalesses, captains of tens and fifties;—and so, in loosest-flowing order, to the rhythm of some 'eight drums' (having laid aside his own), with the Bastille Volunteers bringing up his rear, once more takes the road.

Chaillot, which will promptly yield baked loaves, is not plundered; nor are the Sèvres Potteries broken. The old arches of Sèvres Bridge echo under Menadic feet; Seine River gushes on with its perpetual murmur; and Paris flings after us the boom of tocsin and alarm-drum,—inaudible, for the present, amid shrill-sounding hosts, and the splash of rainy weather. To Meudon, to Saint-Cloud, on both hands, the report of them is gone abroad; and hearths, this evening, will have a topic. The press of women still continues, for it is the cause of all Eve's Daughters, mothers that are, or that ought to be. No carriage-lady, were it with never such hysterics, but must dismount, in the mud roads, in her silk shoes, and walk.[1] In this manner, amid wild October weather, they, a wild unwinged, stork-flight, through the astonished country wend their way. Travellers of all sorts they stop; especially travellers or couriers from Paris. Deputy Lechapelier, in his elegant vesture, from his elegant vehicle, looks forth amazed through his spectacles; apprehensive for life;—states eagerly that he is Patriot-Deputy Lechapelier, and even Old-President Lechapelier, who presided on the Night of

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[1] *Deux Amis*, iii. 159.

Pentecost, and is original member of the Breton Club. Thereupon 'rises huge shout of *Vive Lechapelier*, and several armed persons spring up behind and before to escort him.'[1]

Nevertheless, news, despatches from Lafayette, or vague noise of rumour, have pierced through, by side roads. In the National Assembly, while all is busy discussing the order of the day; regretting that there should be Anti-National Repasts in Opera-halls; that his Majesty should still hesitate about accepting the Rights of Man, and hang conditions and peradventures on them,—Mirabeau steps up to the President, experienced Mounier as it chanced to be; and articulates, in bass undertone: '*Mounier, Paris marche sur nous* (Paris is marching on us).'—'May be (*Je n'en sais rien*)!'—'Believe it or disbelieve it, that is not my concern; but Paris, I say, is marching on us. Fall suddenly unwell; go over to the Château; tell them this. There is not a moment to lose.'—'Paris marching on us?' responds Mounier, with an atrabiliar accent: 'Well, so much the better! We shall the sooner be a Republic.' Mirabeau quits him, as one quits an experienced President getting blindfold into deep waters; and the order of the day continues as before.

Yes, Paris is marching on us; and more than the women of Paris! Scarcely was Maillard gone, when M. de Gouvion's message to all the Districts, and such tocsin and drumming of the *générale*, began to take effect. Armed National Guards from every District; especially the Grenadiers of the Centre, who are our old Gardes Françaises, arrive, in quick sequence, on the Place de Grève. An 'immense people' is there; Saint-Antoine, with pike and rusty firelock, is all crowding thither, be it welcome or unwelcome. The Centre Grenadiers are received with cheering: 'It is not cheers that we want,' answer they gloomily; 'the Nation has been insulted; to arms, and come with us for orders!' Ha, sits the wind *so*? Patriotism and Patrollotism are now one!

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[1] *Deux Amis*, ii. 177; *Dictionnaire des Hommes Marquans*, ii. 379.

The Three Hundred have assembled; 'all the Committees are in activity'; Lafayette is dictating despatches for Versailles, when a Deputation of the Centre Grenadiers introduces itself to him. The Deputation makes military obeisance; and thus speaks, not without a kind of thought in it: '*Mon Général*, we are deputed by the Six Companies of Grenadiers. We do not think you a traitor, but we think the Government betrays you; it is time that this end. We cannot turn our bayonets against women crying to us for bread. The people are miserable, the source of the mischief is at Versailles: we must go seek the King, and bring him to Paris. We must exterminate (*exterminer*) the *Regiment de Flandre* and the *Gardes-du-Corps*, who have dared to trample on the National Cockade. If the King be too weak to wear his crown, let him lay it down. You will crown his Son, you will name a Council of Regency: and all will go better.'[1] Reproachful astonishment paints itself on the face of Lafayette; speaks itself from his eloquent chivalrous lips: in vain. 'My General, we would shed the last drop of our blood for you; but the root of the mischief is at Versailles; we must go and bring the King to Paris; all the people wish it, *tout le peuple le veut*.'

My General descends to the outer staircase; and harangues: once more in vain. 'To Versailles! To Versailles!' Mayor Bailly, sent for through floods of Sansculottism, attempts academic oratory from his gilt state-coach; realises nothing but infinite hoarse cries of: 'Bread! To Versailles!'—and gladly shrinks within doors. Lafayette mounts the white charger; and again harangues, and reharangues: with eloquence, with firmness, indignant demonstration; with all things but persuasion. 'To Versailles! To Versailles!' So lasts it, hour after hour;—for the space of half a day.

The great Scipio-Americanus can do nothing; not so much as escape. '*Morbleu, mon Général*,' cry the Grenadiers serrying their ranks as the white charger makes a motion that way,

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[1] *Deux Amis*, iii. 161.

'you will not leave us, you will abide with us!' A perilous juncture: Mayor Bailly and the Municipals sit quaking within doors; my General is prisoner without: the Place de Grève, with its thirty thousand Regulars, its whole irregular Saint-Antoine and Saint-Marceau, is one minatory mass of clear or rusty steel; all hearts set, with a moody fixedness, on one object. Moody, fixed are all hearts: tranquil is no heart,—if it be not that of the white charger, who paws there, with arched neck, composedly champing his bit; as if no World, with its Dynasties and Eras, were now rushing down. The drizzly day bends westward; the cry is still: 'To Versailles!'

Nay now, borne from afar, come quite sinister cries; hoarse, reverberating in long-drawn hollow murmurs, with syllables too like those of *Lanterne!* Or else, irregular Sansculottism may be marching off, of itself, with pikes, nay with cannon. The inflexible Scipio does at length, by aide-de-camp, ask of the Municipals: Whether or not he may go? A Letter is handed out to him, over armed heads; sixty thousand faces flash fixedly on his, there is stillness and no bosom breathes, till he have read. By Heaven, he grows suddenly pale! Do the Municipals permit? 'Permit, and even order,'—since he can no other. Clangour of approval rends the welkin. To your ranks, then; let us march!

It is, as we compute, towards three in the afternoon. Indignant National Guards may dine for once from their haversack: dined or undined, they march with one heart. Paris flings-up her windows, 'claps hands,' as the Avengers, with their shrilling drums and shalms tramp by; she will then sit pensive, apprehensive, and pass rather a sleepless night.[1] On the white charger, Lafayette, in the slowest possible manner, going and coming, and eloquently haranguing among the ranks, rolls onward with his thirty thousand. Saint-Antoine, with pike and cannon, has preceded him; a mixed multitude, of all and of no arms, hovers on his flanks and skirts; the country once more pauses agape: *Paris marche sur nous.*

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[1] *Deux Amis*, iii. 165.

CHAPTER VI

TO VERSAILLES

For, indeed, about this same moment, Maillard has halted his draggled Menads on the last hill-top; and now Versailles, and the Château of Versailles, and far and wide the inheritance of Royalty opens to the wondering eye. From far on the right, over Marly and Saint-Germain-en-Laye; round towards Rambouillet, on the left: beautiful all; softly embosomed; as if in sadness, in the dim moist weather! And near before us is Versailles, New and Old; with that broad frondent *Avenue de Versailles* between,—stately-frondent, broad, three hundred feet as men reckon, with its four Rows of Elms; and then the *Château de Versailles*, ending in royal Parks and Pleasances, gleaming Lakelets, Arbours, Labyrinths, the *Ménagerie*, and Great and Little Trianon. High-towered dwellings, leafy pleasant places; where the gods of this lower world abide: whence, nevertheless, black Care cannot be excluded; whither Menadic Hunger is even now advancing, armed with pike-thyrsi!

Yes, yonder, Mesdames, where our straight frondent Avenue, joined, as you note, by Two frondent brother Avenues from this hand and from that, spreads out into Place Royal and Palace Forecourt,—yonder is the *Salle des Menus*. Yonder an august Assembly sits regenerating France. Forecourt, Grand Court, Court of Marble, Court narrowing into Court you may discern next, or fancy: on the extreme verge of which that glass-dome, visibly glittering like a star of hope, is the—Œil-de-Bœuf! Yonder, or nowhere in the world, is bread baked for us. But, O Mesdames, were not one thing good: That our cannons, with Demoiselle Théroigne and all show of war, be put to the rear? Submission beseems petitioners of a National Assembly; we are strangers in Versailles,—whence, too audibly, there comes even now a sound as of tocsin and *générale*! Also to put on, if possible, a cheerful countenance, hiding our sorrows; and even to sing? Sorrow, pitied of the Heavens, is hateful, suspicious to the Earth.—So counsels shifty Maillard; haranguing his Menads, on the heights near Versailles.[1]

Cunning Maillard's dispositions are obeyed. The draggled Insurrectionists advance up the Avenue, 'in three columns,' among the four Elm-rows; 'singing *Henri Quatre*,' with what melody they can; and shouting *Vive le Roi*. Versailles, though the Elm-rows are dripping wet, crowds from both sides, with: '*Vivent nos Parisiennes*, Our Paris ones for ever!'

Prickers, scouts have been out towards Paris, as the rumour deepened: whereby his Majesty, gone to shoot in the Woods of Meudon, has been happily discovered, and got home; and the *générale* and tocsin set a-sounding. The Bodyguards are already drawn up in front of the Palace Grates; and look down the Avenue de Versailles; sulky, in wet buckskins. Flandre too is there, repentant of the Opera-Repast. Also Dragoons dismounted are there. Finally Major Lecointre, and what he can gather of the Versailles National Guard;—though it is to be observed, our Colonel, that same sleepless Count d'Estaing, giving neither order nor ammunition, has vanished most improperly; one supposes, into the Œil-de-Bœuf. Red-coated Swiss stand within the Grates, under arms. There likewise, in their inner room, 'all the Ministers,' Saint-Priest, Lamentation Pompignan and the rest, are assembled with M. Necker: they sit with him there; blank, expecting what the hour will bring.

President Mounier, though he answered Mirabeau with a *tant mieux*, and affected to slight the matter, had his own forebodings. Surely, for these four weary hours he has reclined not on roses! The order of the day is getting forward: a Deputation to his Majesty seems proper, that it

[1] See *Hist. Parl.* iii. 70-117; *Deux Amis*, iii. 166-177, etc.

might please him to grant 'Acceptance pure and simple' to those Constitution-Articles of ours; the 'mixed qualified Acceptance,' with its peradventures, is satisfactory to neither gods nor men.

So much is clear. And yet there is more, which no man speaks, which all men now vaguely understand. Disquietude, absence of mind is on every face; Members whisper, uneasily come and go: the order of the day is evidently not the day's want. Till at length, from the outer gates, is heard a rustling and justling, shrill uproar and squabbling, muffled by walls; which testifies that the hour is come! Rushing and crushing one hears now; then enter Usher Maillard, with a Deputation of Fifteen muddy dripping Women,—having, by incredible industry, and aid of all the macers, persuaded the rest to wait out of doors. National Assembly shall now, therefore, look its august task directly in the face: regenerative Constitutionalism has an unregenerate Sansculottism bodily in front of it; crying, 'Bread! Bread!'

Shifty Maillard, translating frenzy into articulation; repressive with the one hand, expostulative with the other, does his best; and really, though not bred to public speaking, manages rather well:—In the present dreadful rarity of grains, a Deputation of Female Citizens has, as the august Assembly can discern, come out from Paris to petition. Plots of Aristocrats are too evident in the matter; for example, one miller has been bribed 'by a bank-note of 200 livres' not to grind,—name unknown to the Usher, but fact provable, at least indubitable. Further, it seems, the National Cockade has been trampled on; also there are Black Cockades, or were. All which things will not an august National Assembly, the hope of France, take into its wise immediate consideration?

And Menadic Hunger, irrepressible, crying 'Black Cockades,' crying 'Bread, Bread,' adds, after such fashion: Will it not? —Yes, Messieurs, if a Deputation to his Majesty, for the 'Acceptance pure and simple,' seemed proper,—how much more now, for 'the afflicting situation of Paris'; for the calming of this effervescence! President Mounier, with a speedy Deputation, among whom we notice the respectable figure of Doctor Guillotin, gets himself forward on march. Vice-President shall continue the order of the day; Usher Maillard shall stay by him to repress the women. It is four o'clock, of the miserablest afternoon, when Mounier steps out.

O experienced Mounier, what an afternoon; the last of thy political existence! Better had it been to 'fall suddenly unwell,' while it was yet time. For, behold, the Esplanade, over all its spacious expanse, is covered with groups of squalid dripping Women; of lankhaired male Rascality, armed with axes, rusty pikes, old muskets, iron-shod clubs (*batons ferrés*, which end in knives or swordblades, a kind of extempore billhook);—looking nothing but hungry revolt. The rain pours: Gardes-du-Corps go caracoling through the groups 'amid hisses'; irritating and agitating what is but dispersed here to reunite there.

Innumerable squalid women beleaguer the President and Deputation; insist on going with him: has not his Majesty himself, looking from the window, sent out to ask, What we wanted? 'Bread, and speech with the King (*Du pain, et parler au Roi*),' that was the answer. Twelve women are clamorously added to the Deputation; and march with it, across the Esplanade; through dissipated groups, caracoling Bodyguards and the pouring rain.

President Mounier, unexpectedly augmented by Twelve women, copiously escorted by Hunger and Rascality, is himself mistaken for a group: himself and his Women are dispersed by caracolers; rally again with difficulty, among the mud.[1] Finally the Grates are opened; the Deputation gets access, with the Twelve women too in it; of which latter, Five shall even see the face of his Majesty. Let wet Menadism, in the best spirits it can, expect their return.

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[1] Mounier, *Exposé Justificatif* (cited in *Deux Amis*, iii. 185).

CHAPTER VII

AT VERSAILLES

But already Pallas Athene (in the shape of Demoiselle Théroigne) is busy with Flandre and the dismounted Dragoons. She, and such women as are fittest, go through the ranks; speak with an earnest jocosity; clasp rough troopers to their patriot bosom, crush down spontoons and musketoons with soft arms: can a man, that were worthy of the name of man, attack famishing patriot women?

One reads that Théroigne had bags of money, which she distributed over Flandre:—furnished by whom? Alas, with money-bags one seldom sits on insurrectionary cannon. Calumnious Royalism! Théroigne had only the limited earnings of her profession of unfortunate-female; money she had not, but brown locks, the figure of a Heathen Goddess and an eloquent tongue and heart.

Meanwhile Saint-Antoine, in groups and troops, is continually arriving; wetted, sulky; with pikes and impromptu billhooks: driven thus far by popular fixed-idea. So many hirsute figures driven hither, in that manner: figures that have come to do they know not what; figures that have come to see it done! Distinguished among all figures, who is this, of gaunt stature, with leaden breastplate, though a small one;[1] bushy in red grizzled locks; nay with long tile-beard? It is Jourdan, unjust dealer in mules; a dealer no longer, but a Painter's Model, playing truant this day. From the necessities of Art comes his long tile-beard; whence his leaden breastplate (unless indeed he were some Hawker licensed by leaden badge) may have come, will perhaps remain for ever a Historical Problem. Another Saul among the people we discern: '*Père*

[1] See Weber, ii. 185-231.

Adam, Father Adam,' as the groups name him; to us better known as bull-voiced Marquis Saint-Huruge; hero of the *Veto*; a man that has had losses, and deserved them. The tall Marquis, emitted some days ago from limbo, looks peripatetically on this scene from under his umbrella, not without interest. All which persons and things, hurled together as we see; Pallas Athene, busy with Flandre; patriotic Versailles National Guards, short of ammunition, and deserted by D'Estaing their Colonel, and commanded by Lecointre their Major; then caracoling Bodyguards, sour, dispirited, with their buckskins wet; and finally this flowing sea of indignant Squalor,—may they not give rise to occurrences?

Behold, however, the Twelve She-deputies return from the Château. Without President Mounier, indeed; but radiant with joy, shouting '*Life to the King and his House.*' Apparently the news are good, Mesdames? News of the best! Five of us were admitted to the internal splendours, to the Royal Presence. This slim damsel, 'Louison Chabray, worker in sculpture, aged only seventeen,' as being of the best looks and address, her we appointed speaker. On whom, and indeed on all of us, his Majesty looked nothing but graciousness. Nay when Louison, addressing him, was like to faint, he took her in his royal arms, and said gallantly, 'It was well worth while (*Elle en valût bien la peine*).' Consider, O Women, what a King! His words were of comfort, and that only: there shall be provision sent to Paris, if provision is in the world; grains shall circulate free as air; millers shall grind, or do worse, while their millstones endure; and nothing be left wrong which a Restorer of French Liberty can right.

Good news these; but, to wet Menads, all-too incredible! There seems no proof, then? *Words* of comfort,—they are words only; which will feed nothing. O miserable People, betrayed by Aristocrats, who corrupt thy very messengers! In his royal arms, Mademoiselle Louison? In his arms? Thou shameless minx, worthy of a name—that shall be nameless! Yes, thy skin is soft: ours is rough with hardship; and well wetted, waiting here in the rain. No children hast thou hungry at home; only alabaster dolls, that weep not! The traitress! To the Lanterne!—And so poor Louison Chabray, no asseveration or shrieks availing her, fair slim damsel, late in the arms of Royalty, has a garter round her neck, and furibund Amazons at each end; is about to perish so,—when two Bodyguards gallop up, indignantly dissipating; and rescue her. The miscredited Twelve hasten back to the Château, for an 'answer in writing.'

Nay, behold, a new flight of Menads, with 'M. Brunout Bastille Volunteer,' as impressed-commandant, at the head of it. These also will advance to the Grate of the Grand Court, and see what is toward. Human patience, in wet buckskins, has its limits. Bodyguard Lieutenant M. de Savonnières for one moment lets his temper, long provoked, long pent, give way. He not only dissipates these latter Menads; but caracoles and cuts, or indignantly flourishes, at M. Brunout, the impressed-commandant; and, finding great relief in it, even chases him: Brunout flying nimbly, though in a pirouette manner, and now with sword also drawn. At which sight of wrath and victory, two other Bodyguards (for wrath is contagious, and to pent Bodyguards is so solacing) do likewise give way; give chase, with brandished sabre, and in the air make horrid circles. So that poor Brunout has nothing for it but to retreat with accelerated nimbleness, through rank after rank; Parthian-like, fencing as he flies; above all, shouting lustily, '*On nous laisse assassiner*, They are getting us assassinated!'

Shameful! Three against one! Growls come from the Lecointrian ranks; bellowings,—lastly shots. Savonnières' arm is raised to strike: the bullet of a Lecointrian musket shatters it; the brandished sabre jingles down harmless. Brunout has escaped, this duel well ended: but the wild howl of war is everywhere beginning to pipe!

The Amazons recoil; Saint-Antoine has its cannon pointed (full of grapeshot); thrice applies the lit flambeau; which thrice refuses to catch,—the touchholes are so wetted; and voices cry: '*Arrêtez, il n'est pas temps encore*, Stop, it is not yet time!'[1] Messieurs of the Garde-du-Corps, ye had orders not to fire; nevertheless two of you limp dismounted, and one war-horse lies slain. Were it not well to draw back out of shot-range; finally to file off,—into the interior? If in so filing off, there did a musketoon or two discharge itself at these armed shopkeepers, hooting and crowing, could man wonder? Draggled are your white cockades of an enormous size; would to Heaven they were got exchanged for tricolor ones! Your buckskins are wet, your hearts heavy. Go, and return not!

The Bodyguards file off, as we hint; giving and receiving shots; drawing no life-blood; leaving boundless indignation. Some three times in the thickening dusk, a glimpse of them is seen, at this or the other Portal: saluted always with execrations, with the whew of lead. Let but a Bodyguard show face, he is hunted by Rascality;—for instance, poor 'M. de Moucheton of the Scotch Company,' owner of the slain war-horse; and has to be smuggled off by Versailles Captains. Or rusty fire-locks belch after him, shivering asunder his—hat. In the end, by superior Order, the Bodyguards, all but the few on immediate duty, disappear; or as it were abscond; and march, under cloud of night, to Rambouillet.[2]

We remark also that the Versaillese have now got ammunition: all afternoon, the official Person could find none; till, in these so critical moments, a patriotic Sublieutenant set a pistol to his ear, and would thank him to find some,—which he thereupon succeeded in doing. Likewise that Flandre, disarmed by Pallas Athene, says openly, it will not fight with citizens; and for token of peace has exchanged cartridges with the Versaillese.

Sansculottism is now among mere friends; and can 'circulate freely'; indignant at Bodyguards;—complaining also considerably of hunger.

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[1] *Deux Amis*, ii. 192-201.

[2] Weber, ubi suprà.

CHAPTER VIII

THE EQUAL DIET

But why lingers Mounier; returns not with his Deputation? It is six, it is seven o'clock; and still no Mounier, no Acceptance pure and simple.

And, behold, the dripping Menads, not now in deputation but in mass, have penetrated into the Assembly: to the shamefulest interruption of public speaking and order of the day. Neither Maillard nor Vice-President can restrain them, except within wide limits; not even, except for minutes, can the lion-voice of Mirabeau, though they applaud it: but ever and anon they break-in upon the regeneration of France with cries of: 'Bread; not so much discoursing! *Du pain; pas tant de longs discours!*'—So insensible were these poor creatures to bursts of parliamentary eloquence!

One learns also that the royal Carriages are getting yoked, as if for Metz. Carriages, royal or not, have verily showed themselves at the back Gates. They even produced, or quoted, a written order from our Versailles Municipality,—which is a Monarchic not a Democratic one. However, Versailles Patrols drove them in again; as the vigilant Lecointre had strictly charged them to do.

A busy man, truly, is Major Lecointre, in these hours. For Colonel d'Estaing loiters invisible in the Œil-de-Bœuf; invisible, or still more questionably *visible* for instants: then also a too loyal Municipality requires supervision: no order, civil or military, taken about any of these thousand things! Lecointre is at the Versailles Townhall: he is at the Grate of the Grand Court; communing with Swiss and Bodyguards. He is in the ranks of Flandre; he is here, he is there: studious to prevent bloodshed; to prevent the

Royal Family from flying to Metz; the Menads from plundering Versailles.

At the fall of night, we behold him advance to those armed groups of Saint-Antoine, hovering all-too grim near the Salle des Menus. They receive him in a half-circle; twelve speakers behind cannons with lighted torches in hand, the cannon-mouths *towards* Lecointre: a picture for Salvator! He asks, in temperate but courageous language: What they, by this their journey to Versailles, do specially want? The twelve speakers reply, in few words inclusive of much: 'Bread, and the end of these brabbles; *Du pain, et la fin des affaires.*' When the *affairs* will end, no Major Lecointre, nor no mortal, can say; but as to bread, he inquires, How many are you?—learns that they are six hundred, that a loaf each will suffice; and rides off to the Municipality to get six hundred loaves.

Which loaves, however, a Municipality of Monarchic temper will not give. It will give two tons of rice rather,—could you but know whether it should be boiled or raw. Nay when this too is accepted, the Municipals have disappeared;—ducked under, as the Six-and-twenty Long-gowned of Paris did; and, leaving not the smallest vestige of rice, in the boiled or raw state, they there vanish from History!

Rice comes not; one's hope of food is balked; even one's hope of vengeance: is not M. de Moucheton of the Scotch Company, as we said, deceitfully smuggled off? Failing all which, behold only M. de Moucheton's slain war-horse, lying on the Esplanade there! Saint-Antoine, balked, esurient, pounces on the slain war-horse; flays it; roasts it, with such fuel, of paling, gates, portable timber as can be come at, not without shouting; *and*, after the manner of ancient Greek Heroes, *they lifted their hands to the daintily readied repast*; such as it might be.[1] Other Rascality prowls discursive; seeking what it may devour. Flandre will retire to its barracks; Lecointre also with his Versaillese,—all but the vigilant Patrols, charged to be doubly vigilant.

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[1] Weber; *Deux Amis*, etc.

So sink the shadows of night, blustering, rainy; and all paths grow dark. Strangest Night ever seen in these regions, —perhaps since the Bartholomew Night, when Versailles, as Bassompierre writes of it, was a *chétif château.* O for the Lyre of some Orpheus, to constrain, with touch of melodious strings, these mad masses into Order! For here all seems fallen asunder, in wide-yawning dislocation. The highest, as in down-rushing of a World, is come in contact with the lowest: the Rascality of France beleaguering the Royalty of France; 'iron-shod batons' lifted round the diadem, not to guard it! With denunciations of bloodthirsty Anti-National Bodyguards, are heard dark growlings against a Queenly Name.

The Court sits tremulous, powerless; varies with the varying temper of the Esplanade, with the varying colour of the rumours from Paris. Thick-coming rumours; now of peace, now of war. Necker and all the Ministers consult; with a blank issue. The Œil-de-Bœuf is one tempest of whispers:—We will fly to Metz; we will not fly. The royal Carriages again attempt egress,—though for trial merely; they are again driven in by Lecointre's Patrols. In six hours nothing has been resolved on; not even the Acceptance pure and simple.

In six hours? Alas, he who, in such circumstances, cannot resolve in six minutes, may give up the enterprise: him Fate has already resolved for. And Menadism, meanwhile, and Sansculottism takes counsel with the National Assembly; grows more and more tumultuous there. Mounier returns not; Authority nowhere shows itself: the Authority of France lies, for the present, with Lecointre and Usher Maillard.—This then is the abomination of desolation; come suddenly, though long foreshadowed as inevitable! For, to the blind, all things are sudden. Misery which, through long ages, had no spokesman, no helper, will now be its own helper and speak for itself. The dialect, one of the rudest, is, what it could be, *this.*

At eight o'clock there returns to our Assembly not the Deputation; but Doctor Guillotin announcing that it will return; also that there is hope of the Acceptance pure and simple. He himself has brought a Royal Letter, authorising and commanding the freest 'circulation of grains.' Which Royal Letter Menadism with its whole heart applauds. Conformably to which the Assembly forthwith passes a Decree; also received with rapturous Menadic plaudits:—Only could not an august Assembly contrive further to '*fix* the price of bread at eight sous the halfquartern; butchers'-meat at six sous the pound'; which seem fair rates? Such motion do 'a multitude of men and women,' irrepressible by Usher Maillard, now make; does an august Assembly hear made. Usher Maillard himself is not always perfectly measured in speech; but if rebuked, he can justly excuse himself by the peculiarity of the circumstances.[1]

But finally, this Decree well passed, and the disorder continuing; and Members melting away, and no President Mounier returning,—what can the Vice-President do but also melt away? The Assembly melts, under such pressure, into deliquium; or, as it is officially called, adjourns. Maillard is despatched to Paris, with the 'Decree concerning Grains' in his pocket; he and some women, in carriages belonging to the King. Thitherward slim Louison Chabray has already set forth, with that 'written answer' which the Twelve She-deputies returned in to seek. Slim sylph, she has set forth, through the black muddy country: she has much to tell, her poor nerves so flurried; and travels, as indeed today on this road all persons do, with extreme slowness. President Mounier has not come, nor the Acceptance pure and simple; though six hours with their events have come; though courier on courier reports that Lafayette is coming. Coming, with war or with peace? It is time that the Château also should determine on one thing or another; that the Château also should show itself alive, if it would continue living!

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[1] *Moniteur* (in *Hist. Parl.* iii. 105).

Victorious, joyful after such delay, Mounier does arrive at last, and the hard-earned Acceptance with him; which now, alas, is of small value. Fancy Mounier's surprise to find his Senate, whom he hoped to charm by the Acceptance pure and simple, all gone; and in its stead a Senate of Menads! For as Erasmus's Ape mimicked, say with wooden splint, Erasmus shaving, so do these Amazons hold, in mock majesty, some confused parody of National Assembly. They make motions; deliver speeches; pass enactments; productive at least of loud laughter. All galleries and benches are filled; a Strong Dame of the Market is in Mounier's Chair. Not without difficulty, Mounier, by aid of macers and persuasive speaking, makes his way to the Female-President; the Strong Dame, before abdicating, signifies that, for one thing, she and indeed her whole senate male and female (for what was one roasted war-horse among so many?) are suffering very considerably from hunger.

Experienced Mounier, in these circumstances, takes a two-fold resolution: To reconvoke his Assembly Members by sound of drum; also to procure a supply of food. Swift messengers fly, to all bakers, cooks, pastrycooks, vintners, restorers; drums beat, accompanied with shrill vocal proclamation, through all streets. They come: the Assembly Members come; what is still better, the provisions come. On tray and barrow come these latter; loaves, wine, great store of sausages. The nourishing baskets circulate harmoniously along the benches; *nor*, according to the Father of Epics, *did any soul lack a fair share of victual* (*δαῖτος ἐΐσης*, *an equal diet*); highly desirable at the moment.[1]

Gradually some hundred or so of Assembly Members get edged in, Menadism making way a little, round Mounier's chair; listen to the Acceptance pure and simple; and begin, what is the order of the night, 'discussion of the Penal Code.' All benches are crowded; in the dusky galleries, duskier with unwashed heads, is a strange 'coruscation,'—of impromptu

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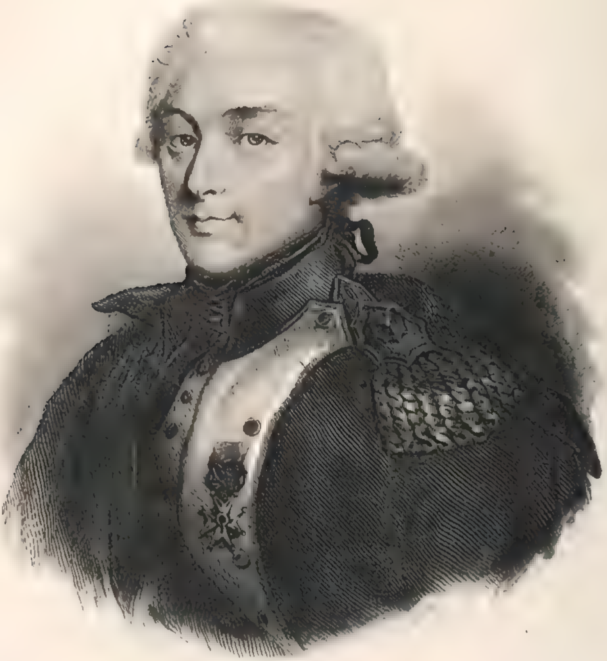
[1] *Deux Amis*, iii. 208.



Lafayette

bill-hooks.[1] It is exactly five months this day since these same galleries were filled with high-plumed jewelled Beauty, raining bright influences; and now? To such length have we got in regenerating France. Methinks the travail-throes are of the sharpest!—Menadism will not be restrained from occasional remarks; asks, 'What is the use of Penal Code? The thing we want is Bread.' Mirabeau turns round with lion-voiced rebuke; Menadism applauds him; but recommences.

Thus they, chewing tough sausages, discussing the Penal Code, make night hideous. What the issue will be? Lafayette with his thirty thousand must arrive first: him, who cannot now be distant, all men expect, as the messenger of Destiny.

CHAPTER IX

LAFAYETTE

TOWARDS midnight lights flare on the hill; Lafayette's lights! The roll of his drums comes up the Avenue de Versailles. With peace, or with war? Patience, friends! With neither. Lafayette is come, but not yet the catastrophe.

He has halted and harangued so often, on the march; spent nine hours on four leagues of road. At Montreuil, close on Versailles, the whole Host had to pause; and, with uplifted right hand, in the murk of Night, to these pouring skies, swear solemnly to respect the King's Dwelling; to be faithful to King and National Assembly. Rage is driven down out of sight, by the laggard march; the thirst of vengeance slaked in weariness and soaking clothes. Flandre is again drawn out under arms: but Flandre, grown so patriotic, now needs no 'exterminating.' The wayworn Battalions halt in the Avenue: they have, for the present, no wish so pressing as that of shelter and rest.

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[1] *Courrier de Provence* (Mirabeau's Newspaper), No. 50, p. 19.

Anxious sits President Mounier; anxious the Château. There is a message coming from the Château, that M. Mounier would please to return thither with a fresh Deputation, swiftly; and so at least *unite* our two anxieties. Anxious Mounier does of himself send, meanwhile, to apprise the General that his Majesty has been so gracious as to grant us the Acceptance pure and simple. The General, with a small advance column, makes answer in passing; speaks vaguely some smooth words to the National President,—glances, only with the eye, at that so mixtiform National Assembly; then fares forward towards the Château. There are with him two Paris Municipals; they were chosen from the Three Hundred for that errand. He gets admittance through the locked and padlocked Grates, through sentries and ushers, to the Royal Halls.

The Court, male and female, crowds on his passage, to read their doom on his face; which exhibits, say Historians, a mixture 'of sorrow, of fervour and valour,' singular to behold.[1] The King, with Monsieur, with Ministers and Marshals, is waiting to receive him: He 'is come,' in his highflown chivalrous way, 'to offer his head for the safety of his Majesty's.' The two Municipals state the wish of Paris: four things, of quite pacific tenor. First, that the honour of guarding his sacred person be conferred on patriot National Guards;—say, the Centre Grenadiers, who as Gardes Françaises were wont to have that privilege. Second, that provisions be got, if possible. Third, that the Prisons, all crowded with political delinquents, may have judges sent them. Fourth, *that it would please his Majesty to come and live in Paris.* To all which four wishes, except the fourth, his Majesty answers readily, Yes; or indeed may almost say that he has already answered it. To the fourth he can answer only, Yes or No; would so gladly answer, Yes *and* No!—But, in any case, are not their dispositions, thank Heaven, so entirely pacific? There is time for deliberation. The brunt of the danger seems past!

Lafayette and D'Estaing settle the watches; Centre

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[1] *Mémoire de M. le Comte de Lally-Tollendal* (Janvier 1790), pp. 161-165.

Grenadiers are to take the Guard-room they of old occupied as Gardes Françaises;—for indeed the Gardes-du-Corps, its late ill-advised occupants, are gone mostly to Rambouillet. That is the order of *this* night; sufficient for the night is the evil thereof. Whereupon Lafayette and the two Municipals, with highflown chivalry, take their leave.

So brief has the interview been, Mounier and his Deputation were not yet got up. So brief and satisfactory. A stone is rolled from every heart. The fair Palace Dames publicly declare that this Lafayette, detestable though he be, is their saviour for once. Even the ancient vinaigrous *Tantes* admit it; the King's Aunts, ancient *Graille* and Sisterhood, known to us of old. Queen Marie-Antoinette has been heard often say the like. She alone, among all women and all men, wore a face of courage, of lofty calmness and resolve, this day. She alone saw clearly what she *meant* to do, and Theresa's Daughter *dares* do what she means, were all France threatening her: abide where her children are, where her husband is.

Towards three in the morning all things are settled: the watches set, the Centre Grenadiers put into their old Guard-room, and harangued; the Swiss, and few remaining Bodyguards harangued. The wayworn Paris Battalions, consigned to 'the hospitality of Versailles,' lie dormant in spare-beds, spare-barracks, coffeehouses, empty churches. A troop of them, on their way to the Church of Saint-Louis, awoke poor Weber, dreaming troublous, in the Rue Sartory. Weber has had his waistcoat-pocket full of balls all day; 'two hundred balls, and two *pears* of powder'! For waistcoats were waistcoats then, and had flaps down to mid-thigh. So many balls he has had all day; but no opportunity of using them: he turns over now, execrating disloyal bandits; swears a prayer or two, and straight to sleep again.

Finally the National Assembly is harangued; which thereupon, on motion of Mirabeau, discontinues the Penal Code, and dismisses for this night. Menadism, Sansculottism has cowered into guardhouses, barracks of Flandre, to the light of cheerful fire; failing that, to churches, officehouses, sentry-boxes, wheresoever wretchedness can find a lair. The troublous Day has brawled itself to rest: no lives yet lost but that of one war-horse. Insurrectionary Chaos lies slumbering round the Palace, like Ocean round a Diving-Bell,—no crevice yet disclosing itself.

Deep sleep has fallen promiscuously on the high and on the low; suspending most things, even wrath and famine. Darkness covers the Earth. But, far on the North-east, Paris flings-up her great yellow gleam; far into the wet black Night. For all is illuminated there, as in the old July Nights; the streets deserted, for alarm of war; the Municipals all wakeful; Patrols hailing, with their hoarse *Who-goes.* There, as we discover, our poor slim Louison Chabray, her poor nerves all fluttered, is arriving about this very hour. There Usher Maillard will arrive, about an hour hence, 'towards four in the morning.' They report, successively, to a wakeful Hôtel-de-Ville what comfort they can; which again, with early dawn, large comfortable Placards shall impart to all men.

Lafayette, in the Hôtel de Noailles, not far from the Chateâu, having now finished haranguing, sits with his Officers consulting: at five o'clock the unanimous best counsel is, that a man so tost and toiled for twenty-four hours and more, fling himself on a bed, and seek some rest.

Thus, then, has ended the First Act of the Insurrection of Women. How it will turn on the morrow? The morrow, as always, is with the Fates! But his Majesty, one may hope, will consent to come honourably to Paris; at all events, he can visit Paris. Anti-National Bodyguards, here and elsewhere, must take the National Oath; make reparation to the Tricolor; Flandre will swear. There may be much swearing: much public speaking there will infallibly be: and so, with harangues and vows, may the matter in some handsome way wind itself up.

Or, alas, may it not be all otherwise, *un*handsome; the consent not honourable, but extorted, ignominious? Boundless Chaos of Insurrection presses slumbering round the Palace, like Ocean round a Diving-bell; and may penetrate at any crevice. Let but that accumulated insurrectionary mass find entrance! Like the infinite inburst of water; or say rather, of inflammable, self-igniting fluid; for example, 'turpentine-and-phosphorus oil,'—fluid known to Spinola Santerre!

CHAPTER X

THE GRAND ENTRIES

The dull dawn of a new morning, drizzly and chill, had but broken over Versailles, when it pleased Destiny that a Bodyguard should look out of window, on the right wing of the Château, to see what prospect there was in Heaven and in Earth. Rascality male and female is prowling in view of him. His fasting stomach is, with good cause, sour; he perhaps cannot forbear a passing malison on them; least of all can he forbear answering such.

Ill words breed worse: till the worst word come; and then the ill deed. Did the maledicent Bodyguard, getting (as was too inevitable) better malediction than he gave, load his musketoon, and threaten to fire; nay actually fire? Were wise who wist! It stands asserted; to us not credibly. But be this as it may, menaced Rascality, in whinnying scorn, is shaking at all Grates: the fastening of one (some write, it was a chain merely) gives way; Rascality is in the Grand Court, whinnying louder still.

The maledicent Bodyguard, more Bodyguards than he do now give fire; a man's arm is shattered. Lecointre will depose[1] that 'the Sieur Cardine, a National Guard without arms, was stabbed.' But see, sure enough, poor Jerôme l'Héritier, an unarmed National Guard he too, 'cabinet-maker, a saddler's son, of Paris,' with the down of youthhood still on his chin,—he reels death-stricken; rushes to the pavement, scattering it with his blood and brains!—Alleleu! Wilder than Irish wakes rises the howl; of pity, of infinite revenge. In few moments, the Grate of the inner and inmost Court, which they name Court of Marble, this too is forced, or surprised, and bursts open: the Court of Marble too is overflowed: up the Grand Staircase, up all stairs and entrances rushes the living Deluge! Deshuttes and Varigny, the two sentry Bodyguards, are trodden down, are massacred with a hundred pikes. Women snatch their cutlasses, or any weapon, and storm-in Menadic:—other women lift the corpse of shot Jerôme; lay it down on the Marble steps; there shall the livid face and smashed head, dumb for ever, *speak*.

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[1] *Déposition de Lecointre* (in *Hist. Parl.* iii. 111-115).

Wo now to all Bodyguards, mercy is none for them! Miomandre de Sainte-Marie pleads with soft words, on the Grand Staircase, 'descending four steps':—to the roaring tornado. His comrades snatch him up, by the skirts and belts; literally, from the jaws of Destruction; and slam-to their Door. This also will stand few instants; the panels shivering in, like potsherds. Barricading serves not: fly fast, ye Bodyguards: rabid Insurrection, like the Hellhound Chase, uproaring at your heels!

The terror-struck Bodyguards fly, bolting and barricading; it follows. Whitherward? Through hall on hall: wo, now! towards the Queen's Suite of Rooms, in the farthest room of which the Queen is now asleep. Five sentinels rush through that long Suite; they are in the Anteroom knocking loud: 'Save the Queen!' Trembling women fall at their feet with tears: are answered: 'Yes, we will die; save ye the Queen!'

Tremble not, women, but haste: for, lo, another voice shouts far through the outermost door, 'Save the Queen!' and the door is shut. It is brave Miomandre's voice that shouts this second warning. He has stormed across imminent death to do it; fronts imminent death, having done it. Brave Tardivet du Repaire, bent on the same desperate service, was borne down with pikes; his comrades hardly snatched him in again alive. Miomandre and Tardivet: let the names of these two Bodyguards, as the names of brave men should, live long.

Trembling Maids-of-Honour, one of whom from afar caught glimpse of Miomandre as well as heard him, hastily wrap the Queen; not in robes of state. She flies for her life, across the Œil-de-Bœuf; against the main door of which too Insurrection batters. She is in the King's Apartment, in the King's arms; she clasps her children amid a faithful few. The Imperial-hearted bursts into mother's tears: 'O my friends, save me and my children; *O mes amis, sauvez-moi et mes enfans!*' The battering of Insurrectionary axes clangs audible across the Œil-de-Bœuf. What an hour!

Yes, Friends; a hideous fearful hour; shameful alike to Governed and Governor; wherein Governed and Governor ignominiously testify that their relation is at an end. Rage, which had brewed itself in twenty thousand hearts for the last four-and-twenty hours, has taken *fire*: Jerôme's brained corpse lies there as live-coal. It is, as we said, the infinite Element bursting in; wild-surging through all corridors and conduits.

Meanwhile the poor Bodyguards have got hunted mostly into the Œil-de-Bœuf. They may die there, at the King's threshold; they can do little to defend it. They are heaping *tabourets* (stools of honour), benches and all movables against the door; at which the axe of Insurrection thunders.—But did brave Miomandre perish, then, at the Queen's outer door? No, he was fractured, slashed, lacerated, left for dead; he has nevertheless crawled hither; and shall live, honoured of loyal France. Remark also, in flat contradiction to much which has been said and sung, that Insur rection did *not* burst that door he had defended; but hurried elsewhither, seeking new Bodyguards.[1]

Poor Bodyguards, with their Thyestes Opera-Repast! Well for them that Insurrection has only pikes and axes; no right sieging-tools! It shakes and thunders. Must they all perish miserably, and Royalty with them? Deshuttes and Varigny, massacred at the first inbreak, have been beheaded in the Marble Court; a sacrifice to Jerôme's *manes*: Jourdan with the tile-beard did that duty willingly; and asked, If there were no more? Another captive they are leading round the corpse, with howl-chantings: may not Jourdan again tuck-up his sleeves?

And louder and louder rages Insurrection within, plundering if it cannot kill; louder and louder it thunders at the Œil-de-Bœuf: what can now hinder its bursting-in?—On a sudden it ceases; the battering has ceased! Wild-rushing; the cries grow fainter; there is silence, or the tramp of regular steps; then a friendly knocking: 'We are the Centre Grenadiers, old Gardes Françaises: Open to us, Messieurs of the Garde-du-Corps; we have not forgotten how you saved us at Fontenoy!'[2] The door is opened; enter Captain Gondran and the Centre Grenadiers: there are military embracings; there is sudden deliverance from death into life.

Strange Sons of Adam! It was to 'exterminate' these Gardes-du-Corps that the Centre Grenadiers left home: and now they have rushed to save them from extermination. The memory of common peril, of old help, melts the rough heart; bosom is clasped to bosom, not in war. The King shows himself, one moment, through the door of his Apartment, with: 'Do not hurt my Guards!'—'*Soyons frères*, Let us be brothers!' cries Captain Gondran; and again dashes off, with levelled bayonets, to sweep the Palace clear.

Now too Lafayette, suddenly roused, not from sleep (for his eyes had not yet closed), arrives; with passionate popular eloquence, with prompt military word of command. National

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[1] Campan, ii. 75-87.

[2] Toulongeon, i. 144.

Guards, suddenly roused, by sound of trumpet and alarm-drum, are all arriving. The death-melly ceases: the first sky-lambent blaze of Insurrection is got damped down; it burns now, if unextinguished yet flameless, as charred coals do, and not inextinguishable. The King's Apartments are safe. Ministers, Officials, and even some loyal National Deputies are assembling round their Majesties. The consternation will, with sobs and confusion, settle down gradually, into plan and counsel, better or worse.

But glance now, for a moment, from the royal windows! A roaring sea of human heads, inundating both Courts; billowing against all passages: Menadic women; infuriated men, mad with revenge, with love of mischief, love of plunder! Rascality has slipped its muzzle; and now bays, three-throated, like the Dog of Erebus. Fourteen Bodyguards are wounded; two massacred, and as we saw, beheaded; Jourdan asking, 'Was it worth while to come so far for two?' Hapless Deshuttes and Varigny! Their fate surely was sad. Whirled down so suddenly to the abyss; as men are, suddenly, by the wide thunder of the Mountain Avalanche, awakened not by *them*, awakened far off by others! When the Château Clock last struck, they two were pacing languid, with poised musketoon; anxious mainly that the next hour would strike. It has struck; to them inaudible. Their trunks lie mangled: their heads parade, 'on pikes twelve feet long,' through the streets of Versailles; and shall, about noon, reach the Barriers of Paris,—a too ghastly contradiction to the large comfortable Placards that have been posted there!

The other captive Bodyguard is still circling the corpse of Jerôme, amid Indian war-whooping; bloody Tilebeard, with tucked sleeves, brandishing his bloody axe; when Gondran and the Grenadiers come in sight. 'Comrades, will you see a man massacred in cold blood?'—'Off, butchers!' answer they; and the poor Bodyguard is free. Busy runs Gondran, busy run Guards and Captains; scouring all corridors; dispersing Rascality and Robbery; sweeping the Palace clear. The mangled carnage is removed; Jerôme's body to the Townhall, for inquest: the fire of Insurrection gets damped, more and more, into measurable, manageable heat.

Transcendent things of all sorts, as in the general outburst of multitudinous Passion, are huddled together; the ludicrous, nay the ridiculous, with the horrible. Far over the billowy sea of heads, may be seen Rascality, caprioling on horses from the Royal Stud. The Spoilers these; for Patriotism is always infected so, with a proportion of mere thieves and scoundrels. Gondran snatched their prey from them in the Château; whereupon they hurried to the Stables, and took horse there. But the generous Diomedes' steeds, according to Weber, disdained such scoundrel-burden; and, flinging-up their royal heels, did soon project most of it, in parabolic curves, to a distance, amid peals of laughter; and were caught. Mounted National Guards secured the rest.

Now too is witnessed the touching last-flicker of Etiquette; which sinks not here, in the Cimmerian World-wreckage, without a sign; as the house-cricket might still chirp in the pealing of a Trump of Doom. 'Monsieur,' said some Master of Ceremonies (one hopes it might be De Brézé), as Lafayette, in these fearful moments, was rushing towards the inner Royal Apartments, '*Monsieur, le Roi vous accorde les grandes entrées*, Monsieur, the King grants you the Grand Entries,'—not finding it convenient to refuse them![1]

CHAPTER XI

FROM VERSAILLES

However, the Paris National Guard, wholly under arms, has cleared the Palace, and even occupies the nearer external spaces; extruding miscellaneous Patriotism, for most part, into the Grand Court, or even into the Forecourt.

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[1] Toulongeon, i. App. 120.

The Bodyguards, you can observe, have now of a verity 'hoisted the National Cockade': for they step forward to the windows or balconies, hat aloft in hand, on each hat a huge tricolor; and fling over their bandoleers in sign of surrender; and shout *Vive la Nation.* To which how can the generous heart respond but with, *Vive le Roi; vivent les Gardes-du-Corps?* His Majesty himself has appeared with Lafayette on the balcony, and again appears: *Vive le Roi* greets him from all throats; but also from some one throat is heard, '*Le Roi à Paris*, The King to Paris!'

Her Majesty too, on demand, shows herself, though there is peril in it: she steps out on the balcony, with her little boy and girl. 'No children, *Point d'enfans*!' cry the voices. She gently pushes back her children; and stands alone, her hands serenely crossed on her breast: 'Should I die,' she had said, 'I will do it.' Such serenity of heroism has its effect. Lafayette, with ready wit, in his highflown chivalrous way, takes that fair queenly hand, and, reverently kneeling, kisses it: thereupon the people do shout *Vive la Reine.* Nevertheless, poor Weber 'saw' (or even thought he saw; for hardly the third part of poor Weber's experiences, in such hysterical days, will stand scrutiny) 'one of these brigands level his musket at her Majesty,'—with or without intention to shoot; for another of the brigands 'angrily struck it down.'

So that all, and the Queen herself, nay the very Captain of the Bodyguards, have grown National! The very Captain of the Bodyguards steps out now with Lafayette. On the hat of the repentant man is an enormous tricolor; large as a soup-platter or sunflower; visible to the utmost Forecourt. He takes the National Oath with a loud voice, elevating his hat; at which sight all the army raise their bonnets on their bayonets, with shouts. Sweet is reconcilement to the heart of man. Lafayette has sworn Flandre; he swears the remaining Bodyguards, down in the Marble Court; the people clasp them in their arms:—O my brothers, why would ye force us to slay you? Behold, there is joy over you, as over returning prodigal sons!—The poor Bodyguards, now National and tricolor, exchange bonnets, exchange arms; there shall be peace and fraternity. And still '*Vive le Roi*'; and also '*Le Roi à Paris*,' not now from one throat, but from all throats as one, for it is the heart's wish of all mortals.

Yes, *The King to Paris*: what else? Ministers may consult, and National Deputies wag their heads: but there is now no other possibility. You have forced him to go willingly. 'At one o'clock!' Lafayette gives audible assurance to that purpose; and universal Insurrection, with immeasurable shout, and a discharge of all the fire-arms, clear and rusty, great and small, that it has, returns him acceptance. What a sound; heard for leagues: a doom-peal!—That sound too rolls away; into the Silence of Ages. And the Château of Versailles stands ever since vacant, hushed-still; its spacious Courts grassgrown, responsive to the hoe of the weeder. Times and generations roll on, in their confused Gulf-current; and buildings, like builders, have their destiny.

Till one o'clock, then, there will be three parties, National Assembly, National Rascality, National Royalty, all busy enough. Rascality rejoices; women trim themselves with tricolor. Nay motherly Paris has sent her Avengers sufficient 'cartloads of loaves'; which are shouted over, which are gratefully consumed. The Avengers, in return, are searching for grain-stores; loading them in fifty wagons; that so a National King, probable harbinger of all blessings, may be the evident bringer of plenty, for one.

And thus has Sansculottism made prisoner its King; *revoking* his parole. The Monarchy has fallen; and not so much as honourably: no, ignominiously; with struggle, indeed, oft-repeated; but then with unwise struggle; wasting its strength in fits and paroxysms; at every new paroxysm foiled more pitifully than before. Thus Broglie's whiff of grapeshot, which might have been something, has dwindled to the pot-valour of an Opera Repast, and *O Richard, O mon*

Roi. Which, again, we shall see dwindle to a Favras Conspiracy, a thing to be settled by the hanging of one Chevalier.

Poor Monarchy! But what save foulest defeat can await that man, who wills, and yet wills not? Apparently the King either has a right, assertible as such to the death, before God and man; or else he has no right. Apparently, the one or the other; could he but know which! May Heaven pity him! Were Louis wise, he would this day abdicate.—Is it not strange so few Kings abdicate; and none yet heard of has been known to commit suicide? Fritz the First, of Prussia, alone tried it; and they cut the rope.[1]

As for the National Assembly, which decrees this morning that it 'is inseparable from his Majesty,' and will follow him to Paris, there may one thing be noted: its extreme want of bodily health. After the Fourteenth of July there was a certain sickliness observable among honourable Members; so many demanding passports, on account of infirm health. But now, for these following days, there is a perfect murrain: President Mounier, Lally Tollendal, Clermont Tonnere, and all Constitutional Two-Chamber Royalists needing change of air; as most No-Chamber Royalists had formerly done.

For, in truth, it is the *second Emigration* this that has now come; most extensive among Commons Deputies, Noblesse, Clergy: so that 'to Switzerland alone there go sixty thousand.' They will return in the day of accounts! Yes, and have hot welcome.—But Emigration on Emigration is the peculiarity of France. One Emigration follows another; grounded on reasonable fear, unreasonable hope, largely also on childish pet. The highflyers have gone first, now the lower flyers; and ever the lower will go, down to the crawlers. Whereby, however, cannot our National Assembly so much the more commodiously make the Constitution; your Two-Chamber

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[1] Calumnious rumour, current long since, in loose vehicles (*Edinburgh Review* on *Mémoires de Bastille*, for example), concerning Friedrich Wilhelm and his ways, then so mysterious and miraculous to many;—not the least truth in it! (*Note of* 1868.)

Anglomaniacs being all safe, distant on foreign shores? Abbé Maury is seized and sent back again: he, tough as tanned leather, with eloquent Captain Cazalès and some others, will stand it out for another year.

But here, meanwhile, the question arises: Was Philippe d'Orléans seen, this day, 'in the Bois de Boulogne, in grey surtout'; waiting under the wet sere foliage, what the day might bring forth? Alas, yes, the Eidolon of him was,—in Weber's and other such brains. The Châtelet shall make large inquisition into the matter, examining a hundred and seventy witnesses, and Deputy Chabroud publish his Report; but disclose nothing *further*.[1] What, then, has caused these two unparalleled October Days? For surely such dramatic exhibition never yet enacted itself without Dramatist and Machinist. Wooden Punch emerges not, with his domestic sorrows, into the light of day, unless the wire be pulled: how can human mobs? Was it not D'Orléans, then, and Laclos, Marquis Sillery, Mirabeau and the sons of confusion; hoping to drive the King to Metz, and gather the spoil? Nay was it not, quite contrariwise, the Œil-de-Bœuf, Bodyguard Colonel de Guiche, Minister Saint-Priest and high-flying Loyalists; hoping also to drive him to Metz, and try it by the sword of civil war? Good Marquis Toulongeon, the Historian and Deputy, feels constrained to admit that it was *both*.[2]

Alas, my Friends, credulous incredulity is a strange matter. But when a whole Nation is smitten with Suspicion, and sees a dramatic miracle in the very operation of the gastric juices, what help is there? Such Nation is already a mere hypochondriac bundle of diseases; as good as changed into glass; atrabiliar, decadent; and will suffer crises. Is not Suspicion itself the one thing to be suspected, as Montaigne feared only fear?

Now, however, the short hour has struck. His Majesty is in his carriage, with his Queen, sister Elizabeth and two royal children. Not for another hour can the infinite Procession get marshalled and under way. The weather is dim drizzling; the mind confused; the noise great.

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[1] *Rapport de Chabroud* (*Moniteur*, du 31 Decembre 1789).

[2] Toulongeon, i. 150.

Processional marches not a few our world has seen; Roman triumphs and ovations, Cabiric cymbal-beatings, Royal progresses, Irish funerals; but this of the French Monarchy marching to its bed remained to be seen. Miles long, and of breadth losing itself in vagueness, for all the neighbouring country crowds to see. Slow; stagnating along, like shoreless Lake, yet with a noise like Niagara, like Babel and Bedlam. A splashing and a tramping; a hurrahing, uproaring, musket-volleying;—the truest segment of Chaos seen in these latter Ages! Till slowly it disembogue itself, in the thickening dusk, into expectant Paris, through a double row of faces all the way from Passy to the Hôtel-de-Ville.

Consider this: Vanguard of National troops; with trains of artillery; of pikemen and pikewomen, mounted on cannons, on carts, hackney-coaches, or on foot;—tripudiating, in tricolor ribbons from head to heel; loaves stuck on the points of bayonets, green boughs stuck in gun-barrels.[1] Next, as main-march, 'fifty cart-loads of corn,' which have been lent, for peace, from the stores of Versailles. Behind which follow stragglers of the Garde-du-Corps; all humiliated, in Grenadier bonnets. Close on these comes the Royal Carriage; come Royal Carriages: for there are a Hundred National Deputies too, among whom sits Mirabeau,—his remarks not given. Then finally, pellmell, as rear-guard, Flandre, Swiss, Hundred Swiss, other Body-guards, Brigands, whosoever cannot get before. Between and among all which masses flows without limit Saint-Antoine and the Menadic Cohort. Menadic especially about the Royal Carriage; tripudiating there, covered with tricolor; singing 'allusive songs'; pointing with one hand to the Royal Carriage, which the allusions hit, and pointing to the Provision-wagons with

[1] Mercier, *Nouveau Paris*, iii. 21

the other hand, and these words: 'Courage, Friends! We shall not want bread now; we are bringing you the Baker, the Bakeress and Baker's-boy (*le Boulanger, la Boulangère et le petit Mitron*).'[1]

The wet day draggles the tricolor, but the joy is unextinguishable. Is not all well now? '*Ah, Madame, notre bonne Reine*,' said some of these Strong-women some days hence, 'Ah, Madame, our good Queen, don't be a traitor any more (*ne soyez plus traître*), and we will all love you!' Poor Weber went splashing along, close by the Royal Carriage, with the tear in his eye: 'their Majesties did me the honour,' or I thought they did it, 'to testify, from time to time, by shrugging of the shoulders, by looks directed to Heaven, the emotions they felt.' Thus, like frail cockle, floats the royal Life-boat, helmless, on black deluges of Rascality.

Mercier, in his loose way, estimates the Procession and assistants at two hundred thousand. He says it was one boundless inarticulate Haha;—*transcendent* World-Laughter; comparable to the Saturnalia of the Ancients. Why not? Here too, as we said, is Human Nature once more human; shudder at it whoso is of shuddering humour; yet, behold, it is human. It has 'swallowed all formulas'; it tripudiates even so. For which reason they that collect Vases and Antiques, with figures of Dancing Bacchantes 'in wild and all-but impossible positions,' may look with some interest on it.

Thus, however, has the slow-moving Chaos, or modern Saturnalia of the Ancients, reached the Barrier; and must halt, to be harangued by Mayor Bailly. Thereafter it has to lumber along, between the double row of faces, in the transcendent heaven-lashing Haha; two hours longer, towards the Hôtel-de-Ville. Then again to be harangued there, by several persons; by Moreau de Saint-Méry among others; Moreau of the Three-thousand orders, now National Deputy for St. Domingo. To all which poor Louis, 'who seemed to experience a slight emotion' on entering this Townhall, can answer only that he 'comes with pleasure, with confidence among his people.' Mayor Bailly, in reporting it, forgets 'confidence': and the poor Queen says eagerly: 'Add, with confidence.'—'Messieurs,' rejoins Mayor Bailly, 'you are happier than if I had not forgotten.'

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[1] Toulongeon, i. 134-161; *Deux Amis*, iii. c. 9; etc. etc.

Finally, the King is shown on an upper balcony, by torchlight, with a huge tricolor in his hat: 'and all the people,' says Weber, 'grasped one another's hand';—thinking *now* surely the New Era was born. Hardly till eleven at night can Royalty get to its vacant, long-deserted Palace of the Tuileries; to lodge there, somewhat in strolling-player fashion. It is Tuesday the 6th of October 1789.

Poor Louis has Two other Paris Processions to make: one ludicrous-ignominious like this; the other not ludicrous nor ignominious, but serious, nay sublime.

END OF VOL. I.

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